HISTORICAL CHANGE IN THE METAPHYSICAL CONCEPT OF PESSIMISM IN GERMAN THOUGHT (1813 - 1973). REACTION TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.

JOHANN JOACHIM ARTUR GESTERING

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
OCTOBER 1982

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL
AND AFRICAN STUDIES

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

Abstract

(1) This historical comparative philosophical analysis studies the function of Indian thought in German metaphysical pessimism. The discussion follows a line of primary focusing points which ensue consecutively from the range of changing views (presented in Part I) held by a selection of German representatives of pessimism. Each one of them is introduced through his writings and analysed both with regard to his pessimism and his Indian connections, as far as possible. This analytical process isolates the most essential cues and concepts. These mark the development of our understanding of the thinker himself (i.e. his form of pessimism), and provide the special connection points through which he can be linked with the other pessimists. In this manner an intra-German set of historical relationships is established.

(2) The isolated cues and concepts, furthermore, formally provide the first links with that actual Indian sphere of thought (Part II) which appears to be responsible for exerting some more or less specific influence on the individual views of the German thinkers. This hypothetical assumption of a pessimistic German response to Indian thought is centred on a second set of historical relationships, namely, those between the various German views and the sphere of Indian philosophy.

(3) The comparative character of this study necessitates a special methodology in order to bridge the natural gap between the German (European) and the Indian tradition of thought. The greater part of the Introduction has, therefore, been allotted to the exposition of a hermeneutic approach to the problem. This hermeneutic is essentially a connective device. It makes it possible to focus the comparative argument on the Indian conceptions behind the (supposedly Indian but, in fact, German) cues and concepts in question.

(4) The combined analysis implies a redefinition of the concept of metaphysical pessimism.

Contents

1. Introduction page 4

Part I: German pessimism

2. Schopenhauer: was India really a starting-point? 39

3. Three Schopenhauerian thinkers: von Hartmann, Mainländer, and Deussen 75
   (A) Eduard von Hartmann: pessimism as a post-Indian way to salvation 75
   (B) Philipp Mainländer: India stabilizes 89
   (C) Paul Deussen: a pessimistic perfection of Indian philosophy 106

4. Spengler: the Indian parallel - fulfilment or pessimism? 115

5. Gebser: the Indian complement - an arational rapprochement, or chaos? 143

Part II: The Indian background

6. The mystical axis of Indian philosophy: according to Agehananda Bharati, in the Upaniṣads, and in the Bhagavadgītā 178
   (A) Agehananda Bharati's description of the 'ineffable', and the hermeneutic problem of culture awareness 183
   (B) The Upaniṣads 197
   (C) The Bhagavadgītā 208

7. Buddhism: existence means suffering 213

8. Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta: ignorance and identity 258

9. Classical Yoga: experiential de-identification 279

10. Summary of German pessimism and what the Indians really meant 295

11. Bibliography 301

Chapter One

Introduction

(1) Searching for pessimism: scope, motivation and objective

When towards the end of the 17th century India began to allow Western curiosity to look into its age-old texts, this elicited a chain of noteworthy reactions in Europe. Following the appearance of the first English translations from the Sanskrit, orientalists and philologists in France and Germany eagerly created the academic discipline of indology. Philosophers immediately caught on. While this new form of access to the enigmas of Indian thought was promising fantastic insights to the European mind, philosophy in Germany unhesitatingly responded with some unexpected views. Developing alongside these new views was what we now call pessimism.(1)

This simultaneous emergence of philosophical pessimism may seem mere coincidence; before we accept this, we intend to find out what

---

(1) Now designating the philosophical doctrine that this world is the worst possible, founded by A. Schopenhauer in 1819, the expression Pessimismus as such is recorded as early as 1776, pessimism in 1794, pessimisme in 1823 (according to H. Kluge, Etymol. Wörbu., 1967).

India could have contributed to this disapproving mode of thought. Did any of its roots, or perhaps at least their tips, touch Indian ground? What did the Indians have that could have moved the German thinkers, and perhaps their pessimism? Furthermore, can the essence of that challenge and response relationship be described? Once we have discerned the crucial features on both sides, we can begin to structure an approach to the conditions for such a description.

The problem seems to present us quite naturally with three important facets: a philosophical, a cultural and a historical one. In order to secure an objective basis for our analysis, we prefer to first establish the essential historical evidence for the main connections between the different standpoints of several selected German thinkers, including their different cultural perspectives. Thereupon we shall be able to present our interpretation of these relevant philosophical connections. We shall concentrate on their main structural elements with regard especially to our chosen philosophers' awareness of their compatibility with India. In other words, a meaningful historical approach to our problem must include a cross-cultural study based on the principles of comparative philosophy.(2)

In the first part of this study we shall make the attempt to provide the necessary historical and philosophical evidence for our opinion that in German thought(3) we can trace a concept of metaphysical

---

(2) "La philosophie comparée" as a concept was presented by Paul Masson-Oursel in 1925 (English in 1926), announcing that "philosophy cannot achieve positivity so long as its investigations are restricted to the thought of our own civilization" (Comp. Phil., p. 33).

(3) We prefer to take the concept of German thought in a broader sense than that of German philosophy. While our typical philosopher (e.g. Schopenhauer) could be characterized as personalistic in his orientation and motivated by his individual thought awareness, our thinkers (Spengler, Gebser) are guided more by the circumstances and forms which surround thought. Also see our pp. 174-177.

(ethical and existential) pessimism from the heyday of German Romanticism until now. The apparent coincidence[4] of an evolving tradition of pessimism with a developing interest in India has allowed us to select as our principal representatives of German pessimism a group of philosophical and cultural thinkers whose views not only appear relevant with regard to a concept of pessimism but also contain some response to Indian thought. Such a selection does, of course, not imply the assumption of any causal philosophical connection between these two criteria, although the question of their relationship motivates this study. Primarily this German predilection with Indian thought provides a bridge which invites us to also search for philosophical pessimism or at least some kind of equivalent in Indian culture, where we do indeed encounter it, but as an ethical attitude. The interrelation of this attitude and Indian philosophy shall be discussed in the second part of our study. This interrelation is important with regard to what the Germans thought they saw. Having followed the German pessimistic outlooks, we have tried to make a representative selection of those parts of Indian philosophy which seem relevant for our discussion of these German views, i.e., relevant with regard to the information on which they relied but also relevant for our own explanation of the Indian attitude of pessimism in the light of Indian philosophy. In short, this study rests on two cross-connected pillars representing two great realms of thought: German pessimism, and related aspects in Indian philosophy. To begin with, we shall concentrate (a) on the pessimistic element in German thought, with special consideration for (b) the reception of Indian elements. The Indian contribution should (b) elucidate the German approach and (a) provide a parallel discussion of pessimism.

In order to illustrate the significance of different cultural perspectives in this connection, we have included a brief interpretation of pessimism in Greek and Roman philosophy at the end of this introduction.

---

(4) As René Gérard observes (Orient, p. 200), "Schopenhauer finds himself, by some extraordinary coincidence, at the point of intersection of Oriental-Occidental research relating to the problem of cognition".

This view into the European philosophical past, we hope, will provide a kind of stepping stone for the two parts which follow.

(2) A comparative methodology on hermeneutic principles

The simple fact that this comparative study handles a variety of German reactions to Indian thought leads us to a question which is decisive for our entire analysis: how can philosophical thought be understood outside its own tradition, or, more specifically, how could we find a method or principle for an adequate interpretation of Indian thought before we look into the German responses.(5) In developing our own approach, we first wish to pay attention to the careful methodological answer which comes from Hans-Georg Gadamer in his hermeneutic.

Referring to the traditions of texts but also to those of institutions and life-styles, or, as we would say, all meaningful traditions, Gadamer assures us that it is "the basic condition of the historicity of human existence to pass on an understanding of itself with itself".(6) Hermeneutic bridges the historical and cultural gap between different ways of thinking, thus making the unfamiliar accessible. For Gadamer this does not just require the historical reconstruction of the original contexts, but also the full understanding of the message beyond its verbal content. This means that understanding must necessarily take place on two levels - namely, with regard to a stepwise understanding of the conceptual meanings and with regard to a homogeneous overall understanding which exceeds the actual expression. Having managed to understand the code one must still be prepared to accept the message, because "it is impossible to understand without wanting to understand." Gadamer calls it an inadmissible abstraction if one believes that an understanding of the meaning would follow naturally from a quasi-synchronization of one's own view with that of some original author by

---

(5) Halbfass (Indien, p. 118, 124-125) warns us that it would of course be futile to aspire to some isolated Indian history seen from purely Indian points of view.

(6) Gadamer, Kl.Schr.II, pp. 1-6.

virtue of a reconstruction of his historical background. "Rather, a certain anticipation of meaning rules the effort for understanding right from the beginning."

According to Gadamer, when we anticipate meaning, we are actually relying on the fact that the parts described by the whole do themselves, in turn, describe the whole.(7) He adds that by doing so we make use of a circular inner relation which, once a rule of ancient rhetoric, now features the art of understanding. If we keep our expectation flexible according to the requirements of the text, we observe how, in the process of understanding, we move back and forth between the whole and the part. As a result our understanding of the meaning increases in concentric circles.(8) Hermeneutic, in Gadamer's sense, is not interested in tracing understanding back to the subjectivity of the author, but wants to explain the phenomenon of understanding in terms of sharing, or of participating in some common meaning.(9) This form of sharing is described as a harmonious play between the movement of tradition and the movement of interpretation. It is this movement, this connectedness, which allows the anticipation of meaning. However, the view of a circular structure of understanding as one which evolves with our own intentional participation in the process of tradition is not of a formal, and not of a subjective or objective nature. "The circle of understanding is not a 'methodical'

---

(7) Gadamer, W.u.M., pp. 275-283.

(8) This principle of circular expansion is to some extent exemplified by Gadamer's own rhetoric.

(9) He mentions (W.u.M., pp. 276-277) that, in the 19th century, Schleiermacher's theory required an act of divination by which, seeing everything through the author's eyes, one was to dissolve all strangeness of a text. Referring to Heidegger, he agrees that the understanding of a text depends on the lasting effect of an anticipatory pre-understanding. Therefore, the circle of whole and part will not be dissolved by complete understanding, but, on the contrary, will be most necessarily consummated.

circle at all, but describes an ontological structural aspect of understanding." Gadamer assumes that our wish to know a certain tradition, including the matter discussed in it, also connects us with it, although not in the form of an undoubted, natural, uninterpreted continuation. In this process of communication he observes a polarity of strangeness and familiarity, on which the process has to rely.(10) The true place of hermeneutic, as he describes it, is the position between the historically interpreted distant objectiveness and the affiliation with a tradition. This explains why hermeneutic is predominantly interested in the conditions under which understanding comes about.

The different anticipations which feature an interpretation, namely, the productive prejudices which promote understanding and those which prevent it, are usually sorted out in the same process of understanding. In trying to find out how this works, Gadamer suggests that we concentrate on the historical distance between the interpreter and the author. Each time in history must rely on its own way of interpreting a textual tradition, because of its own specific historical connection with it. The actual meaning of a text as it interests the interpreter must reflect his undeniable historical difference from the author, and not the author's own occasional situation. For Gadamer the meaning of a text excels its author, not as an exception, but as a rule. "Therefore, understanding is not just a reproductive kind of behavior, but always also a productive kind." Gadamer is openly opposed to the romantic hermeneutic theory which held that understanding meant

---

(10) Gadamer (Kl.Schr.III, pp. 253-255) notices a semantic parallel to this hermeneutic polarity when in the flow of speech, or text, each term is consecutively replaced not by a semantically identical term, but by a slightly changed one. The objectification of meaning remains restricted, since "the linguistic expression is not just inaccurate and wanting correction, but remains always and necessarily, especially when it is what it is capable of being, behind what it evokes and communicates".

reproduction of an original production as well as understanding the author better than he himself did. In his opinion neither greater objective knowledge nor greater application of consciousness could produce any better understanding. For him "it is sufficient to say that one understands differently, if one understands at all."(11) In other words, the distance of time should not be treated as a gap which must be overcome, because it functions as the principle which causes and carries the hermeneutic problem ("der tragende Grund des Geschehens"). This view takes into account that time must have separated us from a certain tradition before we may hope to understand the true meaning of our object. We are reminded, as historical research has learnt, that only from a certain distance is objective knowledge possible. The idea of a complete understanding should, therefore, be visualized as a never-ending process: while in or through the course of time our particular, negative prejudices, together with other sources of error, are being dissolved, new aspects of meaning and new sources of understanding are simultaneously being opened up. "True historical thinking must include in its thinking its own historicity", says Gadamer. This means that it must recognize its own presence in its object. The truly historical object, then, should be considered as a relationship which reflects the reality of history as much as the reality of historical understanding. Recalling that it is a feature of hermeneutic consciousness to include the fact of its own reflective existence in the act of reflecting, Gadamer refers to the hermeneutic nature of philosophy: "Hermeneutic criticism reveals its own productivity only when it is capable of self-reflection, of reflecting on its own critical attempts, i.e. on its own limitation and dependence with regard to these attempts." Hence he defines that "philosophy, which must always, explicitly or not, be a critique of the traditional attempts of thought, is such a hermeneutic process which transforms the structural totalities worked out by semantic analysis into the continuum of translating and understanding, in which we exist and vanish".(12)

---

(11) Gadamer, W.u.M.I, p. 180; II, pp. 274, 280.

(12) Gadamer, Kl.Schr.III, pp. 259-260.

Gadamer's hermeneutic contains a powerful intuitive element of insight into the nature of understanding. We have seen that in his description he has adhered to the idea of a circular structure. Based on a certain anticipation of meaning, the art of understanding relies on an alternating process of mutual explanation resulting from a stepwise acquisition of conceptual meanings, followed by an expansion of the overall meaning which, due to the interpreter's historical distance, even exceeds the actual expression (which, in turn, could prompt some anticipation of meaning). For Gadamer it is simply the role of hermeneutic, as determined by the time-gap, which allows participation in some common meaning. These principles, which in Gadamer's view feature the conditions of understanding, shall support our further pursuit of a methodology on which we can eventually base our actual method of philosophical comparison.

The question of a common standard of meaning, which has only been touched on so far, and which must necessarily play an eminent role in this connection, was largely ignored by our German pessimists. However, nowadays it seems obvious to us that, in order to compare two different philosophical outlooks or theories, we cannot simply inflict the standards of the one theory onto the other. The predicament resulting from such an acute incompatibility makes us wish for some perspective which, while not being on an identical level with either of the compared views, could still include them as two different and concrete cases. Such a meta-perspective, or meta-view, as it could be called, which allows us to determine the necessary comparative criteria has been suggested by A. Piatigorsky.(13) At first sight this approach admits a subjective aspect. We are reminded of Gadamer's hermeneutic consciousness when we are made to realize that this subjectivity implies that we can think about the whole meta-theoretical structure as being our own product and that we can reflect on our act of reflecting. But this meta-structure would acquire a neutral hermeneutic status as soon as we decided to treat it as autonomous, or as an objectified text

---

(13) See A. Piatigorsky, "La riontologizzazione del pensiero nel buddismo", and "Some remarks on other stream".

independent of our or other people's personal philosophical thought.(14)

As we have already gathered from Gadamer, we may anticipate meaning which goes beyond the actual expression. Piatigorsky now directs our attention to the fact that such hermeneutical trends as attributing to everything a meaning of its own can be implied in a concept of apperceptive structures (here referring to our intentional awareness and acceptance of new textual meanings and their integration into our philosophical knowledge). We can avail ourselves of the principle of objective apperception together with that of a subjective meta-theory, making them the two main constituents of a meta-structure which would shelter the different objects of our proposed philosophical comparison. These terms and texts can, up to this point, only formally be considered of philosophical interest, since without our intended interpretation we should not yet refer to any philosophical content. As regards the terms, it is suggested that we first interpret them through a text which draws on our own meta-terms and relies on a view of the original context within our apperceptive structure; this would then allow us to reconstruct them in some way. When it comes to the interpretation of the texts, the apperceptive structure, although characterized by the meaning of the terms, or concepts, would this time emerge from our own textual interpretation.

Having exposed these general hermeneutic aspects of comparative philosophy, we are ready to look at our own special hermeneutic situation. "Reflecting on our reflection", we realize the important role of our own cultural self-awareness (i.e., culture becomes a term of reflection). Practically, our method requires a certain familiarity with the culturally different contents to which we want to apply our meta-perspective. To begin with, our methodology must remain deductive

---

(14) In agreement with Gadamer, Halbfass (Indien, p. 122) argues that we cannot see independent of ourselves. This is correct. Our extended hermeneutic consciousness includes the meta-position: we stay who we are, but more aware of ourselves.

on the basis of some axiomatic assumption. This assumption must feature the meta-concept of a homogeneous philosophical interpretation of all our involved cultures (formally demonstrated by the common meta-philosophical belief in change, p. 24). Our axiology requires compatible criteria from these different cultures in order to secure the essential coherence of our approach. Once our explorations have led to some meta-concept, this must be presented in the simplest and most abstract form possible. As has been pointed out, such an impartial position does not exist independent of our mind, but for the sake of the mere methodological role of such a concept we may or must pose as if it were real. (Incidentally, the same could be said with regard to our personal inner position.) Our meta-concept is needed as a structural device to make sure that Indian thought is not forced into un-Indian, strange, alien, irrelevant concepts and ideas. Instead, both German and Indian thought, each studied in its own right and on its own ground and understood from within, are then led together by following a common point of orientation; i.e., the different philosophical pillars, as we had called those traditions, each having its own basis or origin, are roofed and connected by our meta-concept. (This principle implies that our hermeneutic is always of a comparative nature, even when we should attempt a personal interpretation of just one culture.)

For all practical purposes, we have to proceed as if this assumption were true, examining and testing it by applying it to the exposition of our comparison. Even if merely considered a special "style", this approach should be understood with regard to its power of guiding our thought, and thus our commitment, in such a way that we always bear in mind the different specific cultural awareness of our compared thinkers - and our own. Apart from understanding that we ourselves are a product of our enculturation, we must also apply the idea of a consistent self-awareness[15] to the interpretation of the

---

[15] From Husserl's point of view this would call for some "radical self-understanding" with a new sense for aim and method, for philosophy as a task, on the basis of a critical historical recollection of the philosophical search of European mankind (Krisis, pp. 15-17).

culture in question (e.g., by asking ourselves, to which extent is a theorist aware of his own culture and able to objectify it). In this conscious move away from an unconscious ethnocentric position we try to avoid or reduce the application of one-sided Western concepts or those characterizing the personal views of our European authors.

In behaving as if a truly "cosmopolitan" view were possible our self-awareness is required to stay above the whole course of investigation - and, for critical (self-)examination, below it. Primarily, we shall, for instance, neither exemplify any "experience" nor inductively expose any "essence" but we can demonstrate our present factual level of intellectual or spiritual awareness[16] as perceived and understood in a cultural context. We feel no need to find any special way out of our cultural commitment or even into some sort of independent consciousness. At this point we consider it sufficient to expect an intensification of our cultural self-awareness in the course of our analysis.[17] All other attempts, including all practical and theoretical, spiritual and intellectual procedures going beyond this, would be secondary.

(3) Operational culture perspectives

In talking about culture awareness we have tacitly assumed a hypothetical basis for our cultural divisions.[18] We think that

(16) Schumacher (Guide, pp. 26-27, 83) remarks that "without self-awareness, i.e. without a consciousness which is conscious of itself, man merely imagines that he is in control of himself, that he has free will and is able to carry out his intentions....self-awareness can disappear while consciousness continues".

(17) An exemplary discussion of the problematic aspect of culture awareness is included in Chapter 6 (A).

(18) Both Spengler and Hegel already assume that in each of their cultures there lies, from the very beginning, something axiologically different - something that is not just the result of their own methodological designation. Spengler sees something decidedly essential in each culture. He considers cultures as autonomous with regard to their centripetality.

culture may be perceived in fundamentally different manners. This situation could be described if we first hypothesize that (a) there must be culture; (b) there must be cultural variety; and (c) there must be some connection between this culture and certain others. Favouring an operational understanding of the concept of culture (instead of some more or less restrictive definition),[19] we feel that basically it should refer to those features of the world in general which human beings may consider or have considered to be relevant for their actions and attitudes. Man's self-awareness, when expressed as a reaction against the confinement of consciousness natural to his human condition, follows individual lines of thought shaped by culture or cultural circumstances; he thus relates himself to a meaningful complex of natural and artificial phenomena in support of his self-understanding. Because culture tends to vary between different groups of people or societies, the different approaches which thinkers use in expressing philosophical thought, such as the description of self-awareness, also reflect their own inner cultural condition.

Our meta-perspective takes into account to which extent the perception of culture may comply with the notion of a culture as opposed to that of the culture. While a modern thinker might look at himself as a member of an overall culture of mankind and within this mankind as a member of a certain cultural group and interrelated subgroups, there is no evidence that the ancient Indians shared this perspective. We cannot assume even that they were culture-conscious in terms of having a distinct culture in the sense in which, for instance, England tends to distinguish itself from France. In this sense we must also consider the Romans, even the Greeks, as more culture-specific than the Indians. For the latter, the Brahmanical Weltanschauung reflected the (non-distinct) culture, which, being pervaded and stabilized by ritual, all centred around a man-god relationship. Originally this concept of culture

---

(19) We are committed to the concept of culture in its widest philosophical sense, leaving aside any such normative standards as could be satisfied, for instance, by reducing culture to "a particular class of regularities of learned behaviour" (Bagby, Culture, pp. 88, 95).

(regardless of whether they had some expression for it or not) was not understood as the culture in our modern European sense, and even less as a culture. This situation began to change at the time of the Buddha. However, while our German thinkers' individual expression of self-awareness, as we shall see later, reflects that their own culture is only part of an overall Western culture, the Buddha takes an explicitly a-cultural position (compare pp. 228-230, madhyamā pradipadā). Producing considerable upheaval in the minds of India and the Far East, the Buddha's distinct position contributed directly to the formation of a sense of culture, resulting from the new possibility to differentiate within the previously applicable version of the (objective) culture. The Brahmans became aware of themselves as having a specific culture, one which could be paralleled by that of the Jainas, Buddhists or others, and which was endowed with its own distinctive qualities.

(4) Modern European, Greek and Indian thinking

It has been claimed that only the cultures of ancient Europe and the West cherished the philosophical quest right from the onset of their historical development.(21) Martin Heidegger reminds us that both what we question and how we question are still Greek in essence, although the τί ἐστιν, or quid est, the so-called quidditas, is usually assessed differently by different philosophers.(22) From Plato and Aristotle

(20) Schopenhauer and his followers are largely unaware of the cultural strata underlying their metaphysical reflections. As regards Buddhism, Lamotte (Histoire, p. 27) observes that "the truth found by the Buddha - the origin of things and their destruction - remains exterior to him, independent of the finds of which it can be the object".

(21) By Heidegger, in Was ist das - die Philosophie?

(22) With meta-philosophical insight Schumacher (Guide, p. 52) warns of self-imposed boundaries: "For every one of us, only those facts and phenomena 'exist' for which we possess adaequatio, and as we are not entitled to assume that we are necessarily adequate to everything, at all times, and in whatever condition we may find ourselves, so we are not entitled to insist that something inaccessible to us has no existence at all and is nothing but a phantom of other people's imagination."

onwards philosophy seeks the being of being, as Heidegger puts it. (τί το ὄν - what is being?) "Philosophy is a kind of competence which enables us to view the existing, that is to say, with a view to what it is, inasmuch as it does exist."(23) He explains that through Descartes' doubt (cogito ergo sum) human awareness is turned towards an ego-oriented subjectivity and that, therefore, this feeling of doubt reflects a positive certainty. "Henceforth certainty becomes the authoritative form of truth." For Heidegger this means that the fundamental disposition of modern philosophy remains our trust in the "always attainable absolute certainty of knowledge". (For the Greeks knowledge did not mean truth.) But he feels that the question of what disposition towards the being of being features our present day thinking cannot be clearly answered yet. So far he finds a diversity of dispositions: "Doubt and despair on the one side, blind obsession by untested principles on the other side. Fear and anguish are mingled with hope and trust."

Having hypothetically assumed that there is culture diversity we have also assumed that man relates himself to culture in specifically different ways and, consequently, also perceives himself differently. Therefore, we believe that (apart from the importance of the fundamentally Greek question of philosophy for the overall European historical situation) the anthropocentric trust in an absolute certainty of knowledge, as referred to by Heidegger, is not just a simple feature of the constantly evolving discourse with the authoritative philosophical tradition. It does not merely indicate a gradual shift to some different assessment of the quidditas, but it features a culturally distinctly different mode of thought: post-Cartesian, modern European philosophy. While we cannot deny that history as such has progressed, we must dismiss the question of cultural and philosophical progress. What we can notice is qualitative and

---

(23) Heidegger, Was, p. 17. Jaspers (Glaube, p. 124), shifts the emphasis from being to becoming: "The perennial task of philosophy is: to actually become human by becoming aware of being...(with) the aim of gaining the independence of man as an individual."

quantitative change. From a historical point of view a complex mass of philosophical information has been acquired from within the European tradition as well as from outside, as the attempts to integrate Indian thought demonstrate. European philosophy, as opposed to Greek or Indian philosophy, is aware of its transcendental content as being thinkable, hence describable.(24) Our main exponent of pessimism, Schopenhauer, unconsciously expresses this typically European trait when, on the basis of his anthropocentric self-awareness, he declares that the task of philosophy is to repeat in abstract, general and clear terms that which this world essentially represents.

When examining and describing thought in India, it seems imperative to revise the type of view held by such thinkers as Schopenhauer. Comparative philosophy has learnt to differentiate between philosophies rooted in different cultures. In our own approach we want to maintain a balanced connection between our two main traditions, with the help of a meta-concept emerging from their tentative juxtaposition. From a Western standpoint Indian philosophy seems "mystical" in essence (see Chapter 6). The reason why Indian tradition develops its philosophical views in a different, rather opposite direction as compared to European philosophy may be sought in its basic acceptance of what the occident calls "mystical experience" as a direct means of seeing the truth. It lies in the nature of this mystical seeing that it can only be described indirectly, allegorically or by paraphrase. This experience of reality, this understanding and knowledge of truth, constitues the fundamental - but ineffable - fact for the Indian thinker. On the basis of his personal knowledge, or belief, he demonstrates how to talk about this fact. He comments on it by adding to the development of the deductive exposition of the

---

(24) Pieper (Philos., pp. 46-47) reminds that in pre-modern ontology (up to the 20th century) all being was considered true, and "being" and "true" were exchangeable concepts. Saying that something was "true" meant that it was known and knowable, known through the absolute mind, knowable for the non-absolute mind.

original mystical insight, which functions as the central experience, or the "core event", so to speak. The knowledge of it, or about it, remains the unchangeable target towards which all the systematic explanatory structures which form the tradition are oriented. This idea of tradition implies comment.[25] Indian philosophy, in fact, centres on the formal exposition of comments on the knowledge of truth. This truth, being a timeless principle, determines a timeless relation between this world and the knowledge of it. The Indian philosopher proceeds in the light of the knowledge of truth, which itself remains unaffected by this process of understanding. Unlike European metaphysics, which relies on a stepwise approximation of truth, the Indian approach does not reflect any historical orientation. Our German pessimists, as we shall see later, expand their views as their knowledge develops under the impact of the presumable shortcomings of this world. For the Indian thinker no knowledge can be derived from the fact that there is evil in this world. This problem is left to the private, practical concern of the single individual. A pessimistic attitude in India may determine a man's interest in life, perhaps turning him into a practising ascetic, without affecting the essence of his outlook. Philosophy, just like asceticism, appears as a formal reaction to and a practical consequence of the fact that knowledge existed before and not after the establishment of its philosophical tradition. Since the attainment of this absolute knowledge is the result of a highly personal, mystical, experience, such terms as vidyā, jñāna or prajñā in Brahmanism or Buddhism do not refer to objective knowledge either (see pp. 220, 277). Yet we cannot characterize the Indian view as subjective just because it is based on a personal and incommunicable principle. This Western perspective proves itself inapplicable as soon as we understand that in Indian thought the subjective and objective aspects must somewhere coincide; it becomes irrelevant, since the world,

---

(25) Radhakrishnan (Br.Sū., p. 26) writes: "Even the most original thinkers do not claim to expound a new system of thought but write commentaries (and), even when they advance new views, do so in the name of an old tradition."

including life, as man commonly sees it is not considered as real there. In India reality remains invisible to ordinary perception through reason. It cannot be seen due to the machinations and the intrigues of māyā, the principle of illusion, which is one of the most general categories, implicit everywhere in Indian thought.(26) From this aspect also our individual thinking is māyic. Notwithstanding any private, personal connection with the knowledge of truth, or reality, individual life is, therefore, seen as illusive and insubstantial with regard to the existence of reality, whereas in European thought, as mentioned, the highest possible knowledge is based on man's personal existence and his awareness thereof.

In the given context, we could allocate some intermediate position to the Greeks who, treating truth as a somewhat mystical entity, distinguish it from philosophical knowledge. In India, the core event occurs in the beginning, but with regard to the philosophical situation in Europe it is happening now, and moving along with the present. If we were to find any pessimistic aspects in Indian culture, these would have to be relatable to a mystical orientation with a core event in the beginning. Looking at pessimistic forms of modern European thought, we see that they feature a culture-centred Weltanschauung which is still on the way to finding its core event.(27) In other words, here pessimism presupposes a future-oriented self-awareness. To describe the relative diachronic orientations of Indian and European thought, we could compare India and Europe to two travellers facing each other in the same compartment of a train which is moving in one direction, while the two travellers, who have decided to converse with each other, are looking towards the past or the future of their journey respectively.

Before making the final step in our attempt to expose how under different philosophical guise there exists some common meta-concern, we

---

(26) See Radhakrishnan, Phil.I, pp. 31-36.

(27) Pieper (philos., pp. 52, 85) mentions a concept of philosophical hope corresponding with the aim of philosophy, the understanding of reality from a final principle of unity, of which, however, the finite human mind will never be capable.

we would like to recall the main cultural, philosophical and mystical features referred to so far:

Europe: (a) Self-awareness is a reflection of one's own culture, especially as differing from other cultures and as forming a part of some supra-culture. One's culture is, therefore, conceived of as a culture which differs from others.

(b) Man is his own personal philosophical object of self-study, following an anthropocentric orientation. European philosophical tradition implies the idea of transcendental, thinkable content.

(c) In Europe philosophy has a mystical branch, without being mystical itself.

Greece: (a) Greek culture awareness reflected theirs as being the culture.

(b) For the Greeks and their dependants (Socrates, Seneca), knowledge, as it organizes ideas, also has some instrumental potential (the knowledge of death, and how to go about knowing it). Besides, philosophical effort conditions the thinker for the understanding of truth. The philosopher personally exemplifies a way to "success".

(c) Greek philosophy (Plato, Plotinus) acknowledges a mystical element but distinguishes between truth and knowledge.

India: (a) Culture awareness, originally, is "pre-cultural", i.e. it is still latent, but later stimulated by the appearance of different movements, especially Buddhism.

(b) In Indian tradition knowledge remains a highly formal category, e.g. jñāna, even more so darśana. This formal approach to truth is not committed to content (life, after-life, nothing, what it is all about, or all this together). It includes formal exemplification of personal spiritual, or mystical, "success", e.g. prajñā.

(c) In the Upanisads knowledge means ātma-brahma-vidyā, i.e. mystical experience. Knowledge and truth are not distinguished. Darśana is the exposition of such truth.

(5) A meta-philosophical belief in change

There appears to be some correlation, or even some causal connection, between intuitive thinking and discursive thinking. If we may use the word "intuition", literally meaning insight, inner view, in order to describe an original kind of simultaneous seeing and understanding as opposed to some gradual construction of understanding, we could also refer to it as the experience of a state of knowledge which may well precede any process of viewing, or even inhere in the creation of a view. Apart from any accompanying efforts and favourable circumstances, the enlightening impulse simply seems to manifest itself in the thinker's mind. For the ancient Indian thinker such direct insight or access to knowledge must have been so convincing that he would naturally base his entire outlook on it. As early as in ancient Greece, but even more so in modern Europe, such calm trust in seeing disappears behind a dynamic desire to see, while at the same time a totally different mode of operation is being adopted. Philosophical effort, through discursive reasoning, becomes directly applied to the attainment of knowledge which can be developed on the basis of pre-existing knowledge, admitting intuition only on a secondary operational level. For formal reasons we prefer to adhere to this convenient distinction of "intuitive" thought, although it has been exposed as merely conventional, since no matter what we call the smallest logical steps of knowledge, they have to be accepted as unprovable.(28) Therefore, we could say that in their axiomatic acceptance of some original piece or step of intuition as a basis for all further thinking and commenting, our different philosophical traditions rely on faith or belief.(29)

---

(28) Bambrough (Intuit., p. 202) explains that in trying to go beyond the smallest steps which can be proved, knowledge is commonly accounted for by "intuition". But this is only another form of "saying that it is not by any procedure that we know that the step is sound". Incidentally, for Kant (Kritik, p. 741) the merely subjective assumption of something being true is what characterizes belief.

(29) Schumacher (Guide, pp. 55-66), supplementing Bambrough's remarks, reminds us that the critical observer "also depends on adequateness of

This faith features not only the belief in some original knowledge as such, but also in its meaningfulness, or significance, with regard to self-awareness. The various philosophies reflect different forms or expressions of that self-awareness as it follows the different types of culture. The various perspectives of knowledge all provide ultimate targets for man's self-identification and self-explanation, although from an individual point of view philosophical awareness and mystical experience are certainly different things. Each of these principles, whether considered as adapting itself to the changing generations of philosophers, or characterized as a timeless, constant mystical possibility, should interest us as a central criterion of culture orientation which in turn determines the form of individual self-awareness. Assuming that conscious will can only move in accordance with value consciousness - ethical values as conceived in accordance with enculturation organize their own hierarchy - we find that any intentional value-conscious move must indicate that some change in or of this self-awareness is also welcome or desired. Whenever the

---

his 'faith' or, to put it more conventionally, of his fundamental presuppositions and basic assumptions....Faith is not in conflict with reason; nor is it a substitute for reason. Faith chooses the grade of significance or Level of Being at which the search for knowledge and understanding is to aim." Jaspers (Glaube, pp. 13-14) writes: "Philosophical belief, the belief of the thinking human being, is always featured by the fact that it exists only in alliance with knowledge. Penetrating itself it wants to know what is knowable." He adds that we may distinguish a belief through which we believe (fides qua creditur) and a belief which is believed (fides quae creditur). But we cannot separate them, since they present the subjective and the objective aspect of belief as a whole. "Belief remains undivided within what we split into subject and object." Radhakrishnan (Br.Sū., p. 116) adds that "an act of faith involves a surrender to the creative intuition which transcends the limited awareness of the intellectual self, whereas "belief should set us on to reflection, manana, and contemplation, nididhyāsana, which results in ātma-darśana or vision of the Self".

authority of the mystical experience is stronger than that of the general facts of life, it can provide, or authorize, some presentation of reality suitable as an orientation point for such change. If the facts of life weigh more, human thought would have to find its motivation on that level. Regardless of whether the philosophies are of the commenting or the self-motivating type, they rely on some trust in their original insight. Mysticism believes in the possibility and relevance, or significance, of its experience of a different state of being. Equally, philosophical reason believes in the possibility of the genuine experience of such facts as provide the essential elements for its final conclusions, and further believes that these conclusions, and therefore also the facts, are relevant for an essential self-perception. In other words, both Indian and European philosophy, presenting their characteristic and essential goals in their own traditional culture-specific manner, believe in ultimate change. This point of generalization marks a philosophical meta-level on which they could share the meanings of terms and texts.

(6) The pessimists and their reception of Indian thought

Our central problem, a historical analysis of pessimism in German thought, determines our choice of German thinkers. Their particular approaches to the problem, i.e. the main principles which support their views, determine the range of corresponding Indian concepts. These concepts, once they are hermeneutically analyzed and understood within their traditional Indian contexts, can be related back to the German views through mediation on their meta-level. This means that the axiomatic meta-concept is tested in the course of our comparative description which sees in pessimism a cultural epiphenomenon (partly understandable in terms of an attitude, as in India, or as a concept, as in German thought). Outside of culture we lose track of pessimism.

Beginning with the Germans (introduced by a few thoughts on ancient European pessimism) we shall establish our first evidence by summarizing and epitomizing those parts of their outlooks which support their pessimism, as well as their views on India. These summaries imply the study of the main conceptions, or misconceptions, which they have

used in structuring their pessimistic opinions. Since only certain key concepts or selected views have been borrowed from Indian thought, we must show the essential philosophical cohesion of what we have tentatively termed our "German tradition of pessimism" by disclosing its inner historical relations and connections (mainly in the 19th and to some extent in the 20th century). Through the exposition of such a coherence we may be able to lend some general relevance to the question of why and how German pessimism may have been influenced by certain terms and texts from the cultural domain of India. We shall follow the typical conceptions of Indian thought as used by our German thinkers, with due regard for their historical situation. Their interpretations and applications have to be compared with what we can now - on the basis of our hermeneutic - expose perhaps more objectively. Looking back at Indian meaning (according to our own interpretation) we must follow its historical and philosophical impulses and connections through the relevant German parts, in turn thus adding to the meaning which the Germans saw in it (see Gadamer's circle relation). We consider the history of the factual approaches tried by our different thinkers as immaterial (even if it could ever be retraced). Instead, we want to understand the philosophical reception, i.e. their theoretical approaches and how these are historically connected. It is not the history of their indological errors which is of interest, but that of their contribution to the complex of "meaning"! We feel that this positive product of theirs must be of central importance for the creation of a coherent idea of that problem on which they all touched in their own individual manner. Quite analogously, but within a wider perimeter, Indian thought - regardless of the historic forms of its messages which influenced our Germans - is bound to make its philosophically meaningful contribution to our explication of some "meta-pessimism" harbouring the elements for a comprehensive definition of the philosophical concept of pessimism.

Modern Western thinking clearly distinguishes "theory" from "practical life", considering the two as often incompatible. In Indian culture we find it hard to distinguish the two principles. The ancient Greeks, assuming a position somewhere in between, were trying to

establish philosophically their own position and considered themselves as exemplifiers of their own theory. Before looking at the different roles of theory and practice in the different cultures referred to, we would like to hypothetically distinguish beforehand four principal levels of pessimism:

(1) Historical level: In Europe we can differentiate between historical pessimism, implying the notion of mankind (but not vice versa), and philosophical (e.g. ethical, or existential) pessimism. History as an outer force can be very relevant to the philosophy of pessimism.

(2) Anthropological[30] level: In Europe we also face a complex pessimistic connection of practice and theory, and we encounter both an ethical attitude and an ethical concept of pessimism. The idea of mankind can also be understood with regard to its situational connections (such as sharing the practical problems of good and evil).

(3) Zero-level: The Indian background allows for everything to be treated as practical and as theoretical.

(4) Individual level: The Greek tradition concerns itself with the individual only (including existential pessimism).

In their meta-philosophical belief in change our six principal German thinkers sustain either the anthropological or the historical level of pessimism, or both. Schopenhauer, who, in opposition to Hegel, personally rejects any historical approach, nevertheless happens to set a historical standard of pessimism within the framework of our comparison. He also provides the main metaphysical level of reference for our analysis of the changing concept of pessimism. Furthermore, he touches off the discussion about the roles of some of the fundamental Indian concepts used by our Germans. Von Hartmann, Mainländer and

---

(30) Philosophical anthropology (as distinct from scientific and theological anthropology) derives all cultural achievements from the fundamental existential and metaphysical structures of human existence (see Scheler, St.d.Menschen, pp. 9, 87).

Deussen, recombining their Schopenhauerian impulses with their own better knowledge of Indian philosophy, use anthropological as well as historical perspectives. Finally we encounter history as the main outer force which rules both Spengler's vision of segregated cultural fulfilment and Gebser's worried hope for an integration of the chaotic culture forces. Both treat ethical and existential questions culturologically.

In Indian philosophy all original (mystical) experience, that is to say all belief in such experience, including the philosophical consequences, is personally exemplified by the thinker's practical attitude to life, which may include an attitude of pessimism. Indian thinking in connection with its mystical axis has been described and criticized by Agehananda Bharati. This Austrian-American social anthropologist and indological thinker is of particular interest to us because in his denuding reports, based on his own mystical experience in combination with his own remarkable Indian enculturation, he involuntarily also offers himself as a hermeneutic example of (deficient) culture awareness. Using his contribution as a methodological basis, we trace the meta-philosophical role of pessimism in response to the mystical impulse in Indian thought in the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgītā. In the following three chapters on Buddhism, Vedānta and Yoga we try to epitomize the essential philosophical content of each of these three major traditions. We then focus on the main concepts which have been borrowed (often quite indiscriminately) by our Germans, exposing how and why in an Indian structural context their pessimistic implications undergo fundamental change.

(7) Pessimism in ancient European thought: Plato, Seneca and Plotinus

The following presentation of pessimistic aspects in the Socratic pursuit of truth as knowledge of eternal being, in the Stoics' strife for theoretical and practical virtue, and in the Neo-Platonists desire for liberation from matter through mystical-intuitive knowledge, shall illustrate the special cultural position of ancient European philosophy (regardless of any segregative or integrative outer historical aspects). Since it combines features of both Indian and German thought, it allows

us to derive an extra perspective for our description of German pessimism from it.

When, asking ourselves to what extent Plato (472 - 347) could be considered a pessimist, we follow his description of the human nature in, for instance, his Apology and in Theaitetos, we discover that he assumes a dual attitude towards life. On the one hand he shows his concern about the world he must live in; his attitude towards the facts of his human situation is, as we shall find, largely negative. On the other hand he is interested in anything that transcends the facts of common life, especially man's ability to draw conclusions on the true nature of things. His firm belief in this possibility may be considered positive. He demonstrates how the world of man and the realms of thought, i.e. the practical and the theoretical, become linked by the person of the philosopher himself.

In the Apology we are presented with a distinctly negative view of the actual world, highlighted by the execution of Socrates.(31) The man who tries to find ways to overcome the shortcomings of this world is sentenced to death for it. Socrates is facing a systematic propagation, almost an "institutionalization", of evil when he states that "anonymous accusations were already taught to the children". But then again he expresses hope, in mentioning that "the adolescents imitate him". This second fact shows him that there are at least some minds who are seeking a way out of untruthfulness. Socrates, who cannot change the world as such, tries to find wisdom as the only possible means of overcoming the negative side of its nature. He cannot "teach wisdom to others but he offers himself as a model for all those who are willing to share his perspective". The subtle wisdom which Socrates has to offer, as opposed to the concrete evils of the world, consists in a well-balanced attitude towards ignorance rather than in a firm and clear-cut body of knowledge: "He is wise with a kind of wisdom suiting man - the others are not. He has the knowledge of his ignorance - a knowledge others are lacking." Socrates explains that "when the god in Delphi said that 'of all men

---

(31) Plato, II, pp. 191-196.

Socrates is the wisest' he only meant him to serve as an example, because he had realized how small human wisdom was. By questioning others he was trying to refute that."

In Theaitetos Socrates states that some, after they have been questioned by him, find out things themselves.(32) This means that his fundamental attitude and method could be transferred onto anyone really willing to adopt it. According to Socrates this search for wisdom also constitutes the only possible way to happiness. We learn that "victories at the Olympic Games cause people to only appear happy, whereas he makes them be happy". This happiness is the result of proper thinking which "consists in the conversation of oneself with one's soul". By letting us know that "a life without quest of the self is not worth living", he denies any hope for real happiness to the many. He expects safe happiness only in the realm of wisdom which is beyond the reach of those who prefer to remain attached to the ordinary world with its shortcomings. Socrates' practical (and ethical) optimism shows up in the fact that, whenever he is awake, he is constantly in pursuit of the latest version of his own positive outlook. This optimism bears on those inner possibilities of man which may transcend the boundaries of ordinary life. It is developed against the background of what is presented as a factually bad world, a world which generally wants to avoid understanding and tries to destroy those who seek knowledge and wisdom. Socrates' view with regard to the world and life is summed up in his own opinion about death. He sees two possibilities: "Dying means the end of being, of feeling, or: it just results in a new realm of existence for the souls. If existence continues, there will be no essential change. But if death results in some sensationless kind of sleep, it may be considered a gain." This final remark, although phrased in a positive form, reveals Socrates' fundamentally pessimistic attitude towards life in the actual world. On the basis of his empirical knowledge of life he concludes "impossible that the bad will vanish, because there must necessarily be something opposed to the good....Therefore, we also should seek to flee from here to there as soon as possible".

---

(32) Plato, III, pp. 221-228.

Plato, who is optimisitc with regard to his own perception, emphasizes (perhaps on account of some educational or ethical concern) that wisdom and happiness can be obtained. But to some extent his view of the actual world is that of an existential pessimist, as is illustrated dramatically by the circumstances which lead to Socrates' death. Socrates, who has lived his life, cannot be harmed by death. Practically, because he is already old, and theoretically, because he is safe in his personal realm of wisdom.(33) There may be an element of mystical self-identification in Socrates' private outlook, but not in his philosophical endeavour to find truth (ἀλήθεια). This part of his exposition perhaps appears as formal because it is not mystical (quite unlike Indian philosophy which pursues the formal exposition of the mystical). However, he refers to (his) mystical experience in terms of his eudemonistic relationship, which is personal, as opposed to the official and traditional cosmocentric view (see Gebser's description of the axial period, p. 152). Socrates' way of seeking virtue (ἀρετή) and justice (δικαιοσύνη) by putting all his interest into his personal eudemonism made his approach punishable in the eyes of a society for which religion was a highly social affair. Plato, as expressed through Socrates' ego-centred view, links up an optimistic, metaphysical, theoretical outlook with a pessimistic, realistic perspective which is based on the practical side of life. This position is exemplified by his, the philosopher's, own personality, and, in principle, considered transferable onto others.

---

(33) Jaspers (Glaube, p. 11) explains the type of truth which Socrates refused to disavow, as an example of faith in the certainty of the truth gained. He distinguishes: "Truth through which I live can only exist through self-identification with it; it is historical in its appearance, not of generally objective validity, but it is absolute. Truth which I can prove can exist without me; it is generally valid, ahistorical, timeless, but not absolute, rather dependent of the presuppositions and methods of knowledge in connection with the finite."

We also find optimism and pessimism in Seneca's philosophy. In one of his letters to Lucilius, Seneca (4 B.C. - 65 A.D.) subscribes to the dualistic view of Stoic philosophy regarding the fundamental structure of the universe: "Our Stoic philosophers, as you know, declare that there are two things in the universe which are the source of everything, namely, cause and matter. Matter lies sluggish, a substance ready for any use, but sure to remain unemployed if no one sets it in motion. Cause, however, by which we mean reason, molds matter and turns it in whatever direction it will, producing thereby various concrete results."(34) Seneca conceives of the cosmic cause as God or, on a smaller scale, soul. "God's place in the universe corresponds to the soul's relation to man. World-matter corresponds to our mortal body; therefore let the lower serve the higher." The view that man is a miniature replica of the universe, in which matter has to serve reason, is Seneca's key to a full understanding of the roles of good and evil. With reference to the latter he succinctly states: "And yet life, Lucilius, is a real battle."(35) Rating physical hardship as a fundamental human condition, he laments: "Behold this clogging burden of a body, to which nature has fettered me!"(36) And more specifically: "The evil that afflicts us is not external, it is within us, situated in our vitals."(37) For Seneca this suffering does not come at random. He rather sees it as a guiding force which shows the human soul its cosmic way. The soul in turn attracts the necessary physical conditions, even though they may be painful: "I have been assailed by losses, accidents, toil, and fear; this is a common thing.... it was an inevitable thing. Such affairs come by order, and not by accident....When everything seems to go hard and uphill, I have trained myself not merely to obey God, but to agree with his decisions. I follow him because my soul wills it, and not because I must."(38)

---

(34) Seneca, Ep.I.65 (p. 445-457).

(35) Seneca, Ep.III.96 (p. 107).

(36) Seneca, Ep.I.24 (p. 177).

(37) Seneca, Ep.I.50 (p. 333).

(38) Seneca, Ep.III.96 (p. 105).

The soul, in its interaction with matter, always enjoys a certain degree of freedom, which may allow the individual to overcome his worldly entanglements and self-deceptions. "There awaits us, if ever we escape from these low dregs to that sublime and lofty hight, peace of mind and, when all error has been driven out, perfect liberty (which) means possessing supreme power over oneself."(39) This potential for achieving ultimate freedom constitutes man's present inner freedom. "For my body is the only part of me which can suffer injury. In this dwelling, which is exposed to peril, my soul lives free."(40) Seneca, reminding us of Socrates, interprets death in terms of a gain: "It is either the end, or a process of change. I have no fear of ceasing to exist; it is the same as not having begun. Nor do I shrink from changing into another state, because I shall, under no conditions, be as cramped as I am now."(41) Rejecting any logical approach to the problem of death, he suggests that "the soul must be hardened by long practice, so that it may learn to endure the sight and the approach of death".(42) Seneca, facing fearlessly the hereafter, consoles: "These delays of mortal existence are a prelude to the longer and better life.... therefore, look forward without fearing to that appointed hour, the last hour of the body but not of the soul."(43) Besides, for some he sees a chance that, "after long and concentrated study", they may eventually understand the good, and consequently happiness.(44)

Far from recommending any disinterested or apathetic behaviour of indifference, Seneca's Stoic philosophy simply calls for practical contentment, endurance and neither love nor hatred of life, suggesting "to follow the natural courses of this most beautiful universe, into which all our future sufferings are woven".(45) Death will in any case

---

(39) Seneca, Ep.II.75 (p. 145).
(40) Seneca, Ep.I.65 (p. 457).
(41) Seneca, Ep.I.65 (p. 449).
(42) Seneca, Ep.II.82 (p. 451).
(43) Seneca, Ep.III.102 (p. 181).
(44) Seneca, Ep.III.124 (p. 437).
(45) Seneca, Ep.III.107 (p. 229).

at least liberate man of his pains. Furthermore, individuals who have reached a harmonious understanding of life in its completeness may achieve liberation of their soul. However, we receive no special description of the actual mechanism or the underlying structure of this final change.

Centred on himself, Seneca's practical statements and suggestions reflect an even stronger existential and ethical pessimism than in Socrates' case. The eudemonistic side of his Stoic perspective, too, is essentially pessimistic, conceding on a common level not more than a relative gain through death. In addition, and with some moderate teleological optimism, he indicates the possibility of a spiritual gain on the basis of a personal inner reality which may be accessible to the few. Man has little choice but to bear his major griefs as they are allotted to him, his only trustworthy support consisting of his faculty of reason, which may help him to organize his practical position while the suffering might promote his inner understanding.

Our last representative of ancient European thought, Plotinus (205 - 270), also assumes two fundamental cosmic constituents: soul and matter. It is soul in its individual aspect which may animate matter and thus give rise to a living organism. In this coupling the soul's originally full power of reason and authentic intellection is hampered by the presence of matter. This condition causes error, wrong action and pain. "The soul appears to be present in the bodies by the fact that it shines into them: it makes them living beings not by merging into the body but by giving forth, without any change in itself, images or likenesses of itself like one face caught by many mirrors."(46) In this indirect manner the various human faculties and functions are produced. "That soul, then, in us will in its nature stand apart from all that can cause any of the evils which man does or suffers; for all such evil, as we have seen, belongs only to the animate, the couplement....we sometimes see falsely because we credit only the lower perception, that of the couplement, without applying the tests of the

---

(46) Plotinus, En.I.1.8 (pp. 36-37).

reasoning-faculty."[47] Operating in an individualized material form, the soul "falls under the conditions of the entire living experience: this compound it is that sins, it is this, and not the other, that pays penalty". On the level of matter the soul can only retain partial freedom, but this is the freedom on which all further conscious development of the individual depends. This development is determined by a compromise between the inner quality of the soul and its coincidental outer conditions. "The action of the soul will be in part guided by the environment while in other matters it will be sovereign, leading the way where it will. The nobler soul will have the greater power; the poorer soul the lesser."[48] Plotinus points out carefully that the soul can never be evil in itself, although it may get very entangled in evil. Evil can never be in the soul, but it may well surround it. Plotinus quotes and explains: "Evil is of necessity, for there must be a contrary to good" (compare p. 29, Plato). He conceives of it as a cosmic necessity in correlation with the existence of matter, "for necessarily this all (cosmos) is made up of contraries: it could not exist if matter did not".[49] However, in the condition of embodiment there lies the evil. "The bodily kind, in that it partakes of matter is an evil thing. What form is in bodies is an untrue form: they are without life...they are hindrances to the soul in its proper act; in their ceaseless flux they are always slipping away from being." For Plotinus being is impossible without soul. Therefore, evil, being the opposite of soul, is classified by him as non-being, "as something

---

(47) Plotinus, En.I.1.9 (pp. 37-39). Compare Schumacher (Guide, p. 154) who expresses his concern about the modern repercussions of this kind of "voluntary limitation of the limitless intellect" to the fashionable, highly selective scientific kind of perspective, which, overriding the cultivation of self-knowledge, appears to him as one of the main reasons "why most people live in a state of continuous anxiety". Heidegger (Gelass., pp. 13, 25) sees a fatal trend in the unquestioned replacement of contemplative thought by unaware computing thinking.

(48) Plotinus, III.1.8 (p. 9).

(49) Plotinus, I.8.7 (p. 100).

of an utterly different order from authentic-being". This is important, because this view also makes it impossible to see man as essentially evil. "Evil was before we came to be; the evil which holds men down binds them against their will; and for those that have the strength - not found in all men, it is true - there is a deliverance from the evils that have found lodgement in the soul." The urge to do away with the evil rooted in matter seems to follow naturally. However, as Plotinus explains, the answer does not lie in hiding away from society, but in overcoming the delusions of matter wherever they are encountered, by "disengaging the self from the body...the precept to "flee hence" (Socrates) does not refer to earthly life".(50) Perfect life can be reached through knowledge and its consequent application in life. Through full concentration on and withdrawal to his immaterial true nature everybody has the chance to experience perfect happiness, although opportunities may differ according to his actual circumstances.

Porphyry, in his biography of Plotinus, mentions that the latter when he was still a student of philosophy became "eager to investigate... the system adopted among the Indians". Plotinus' view, in fact, appears to have profited from some early form of Sāmkhya philosophy. (The soul-matter relation in his outlook resembles that between puruṣa and prakṛti; compare Yoga, p. 289.)(51) Even if not so, his two-fold attitude towards evil on a higher and a lower level allows him to look at it as a very neutral observer, in fact almost too neutral. There is no cultural dimension to his concept of evil. Absolute evil, in a sense, is not even necessarily bad: whenever the soul remains unaffected by it, the two are as it were in a state of peaceful co-existence. Whenever

---

(50) Plotinus, I.8.6 (p. 98).

(51) Hirschberger (Phil., p. 301) mentions that Plotinus had accompanied Emperor Gordian III in his campaign against the Persians in an unsuccessful attempt to familiarize himself with their wisdom as well as that of the Indians. His background remained entirely Greek. Besides, Capelle (Gr.Phil., pp. 5-6) emphasizes strongly that original Greek philosophy was in no way indebted to any Oriental culture.

soul-life gets involved with matter it leads to some experience of evil according to circumstances. Evil, from simple ignorance to conscious suffering, is accepted as a fact, but not pessimistically. It does not contradict or destroy human existence. Instead, it can be mastered in an act of deliverance. For Plotinus, or Socrates, it is this world they are primarily concerned about, anything beyond that is some private opportunity, even though privately perhaps extremely meaningful. The achievement of pure existence, of good, is, strictly speaking an inner reality. The wise have achieved a greater awareness of this than others, "seeing things very differently from the average man".(52) The philosophers personally exemplify their knowledge: "Their right action is the expression of their own power."(53) In this connection Porphyry describes to which extent Plotinus had realized inner reality through his own power: "Good and kindly, singularly gentle and engaging..., he laboured strenuously to free himself and rise above the bitter waves of this blood-drenched life...for the term, the one end, of his life was to become uniate, to approach to the God over all: and four times, during the period I passed with him, he achieved this term, by no mere latent fitness but by the ineffable act."(54)

Plotinus' disregard for the world of matter - as Porphyry observes, "his handwriting was slovenly; he misjoined words; he cared nothing about spelling; his one concern was only for the idea" - reminds us of an attitude of weariness which can be observed in present Western society (compare Spengler, taedium vitae, p. 122). The modern urban individual often does not seem to care personally for the maintenance of his world when it has become almost unmanageable for him, due to his own inadequate perception and one-sided understanding. Some social behaviour today seems to reflect a feeling of defeat by the mass of individually unmanageable administrative data and technological information, and,

---

(52) Plotinus, I.4.8 (p. 65).

(53) Plotinus, III.1.10 (p. 11).

(54) Porphyry, "On the life of Plotinus and the arrangement of his work", sect. 23, Plotinus, p. 23.

consquently, an anomic tendency to break away into personal isolation, as expressed by the rejection of conventional values which have often lost their traditional meaning. Once certain qualities of the existing culture and the social system have given rise to fundamental doubt, a person can no longer be expected to take seriously what apparently has already stopped being serious in itself. "Countercultural" attempts to bring new order into existing weak or disrupted cultural structures by using superficially modified traditional methods seem to confirm the old ways, although negatively, rather than to overcome them. But, by being antisocial a person does not necessarily become a mystic. Plotinus, in fact, evaluated and treated the outer world very conscientiously. He lucidly explains to us the various reasons for his disregard for outer reality, whereas, when members of modern society reject the outer world their attitude often seems to be based on disapproval and abomination alone. Having no conscious access to any inner alternative, their indifference or anxiety may be expressions of some amorphous existential pessimism. Plotinus, who is consciously operating on different levels of reality, can face his personal possibilities simply as facts.

Socrates, Seneca and Plotinus personally exemplify their philosophical positions. Knowledge organizes ideas inasmuch as it consists of an understanding of their connections. In Socrates this instrumental potential, i.e. the process of applying knowledge, or thinking, could - as a by-product - have a certain conditioning effect with regard to his private positive outlook on truth, thereby improving his inner awareness. There is a mutual stimulation between the intellectual and the mystical principle. In his private eudemonistic pursuit we find optimism, in his philosophical exposition and his reaction to culture, pessimism. Seneca favours a form of intellectual, non-mystical wisdom. His quite analytical testimony of man's suffering does not lift him truly above it. He is moderately optimistic in that death represents for him a relative gain. But his ethical outlook, predominantly of practical value, and his reaction to his existential condition are pessimistic. For Plotinus, evil as a natural counterpart to good is basically neutral. Through wrong seeing evil becomes

a practical hindrance. Cultivated awareness and philosophical wisdom are means of escape. Admitting pessimism only with regard to some misunderstanding of evil, Plotinus is largely optimistic. In agreement with our three ancient philosophers, and as an initial postulate, we accept that there is suffering in all aspects of life. However, as Porphyry teaches us, suffering alone is not sufficient to deduce pessimism.

Part I: German pessimism

Chapter Two

Schopenhauer: was India really a starting-point?

One of the first and most enthusiastic responses to Indian philosophy came from an outsider of German thought, the private philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 - 1860). His indebtedness to the Indian thinkers has often been rashly assessed in the face of his philosophical Indian references. We feel that the extent to which the romantic discoveries in India may have provided a starting-point for Schopenhauer's unusual outlook can only be appreciated as long as we are aware of the contemporary German cultural element in the history of his own philosophical background. The self-willed branch of German pessimism, as we have set out to study it here, represents more than a historical part of the European philosophical family tree: our entire network of Indian correspondences is also suspended from it. The principal segment of this branch originated with Schopenhauer's work. From here we shall extract some of the key concepts required for our analysis of both the inter-German and the German-Indian relationships.

(1) Stimulations and irritations

Philosophically we are at liberty to assume with Schopenhauer that at the roots of the world as we perceive it there exists some principle of

cognition which concentrates all understanding within itself, but which normally eludes our own efforts to apprehend it. In ontological terms, such an exclusive principle would imply that besides this innermost, absolute seeing, knowing, hearing and understanding thing there exists no other being - "praeter id, videns, et sciens, et audiens, et intelligens ens aliud non est", as he quotes in a very revealing manner.(1) Not only the content but also the form and the circumstances which feature this illustrating line of references are most interesting. Schopenhauer aptly includes it in his first work "on the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason", originally submitted as his doctoral thesis at Jena in 1813, in which he explains that there cannot be any "cognition of cognizing; because this would necessitate that the subject should separate from cognition and yet cognize cognition, which is impossible".(2) In accepting this we find ourselves faced by a very exclusive object which, at the same time, represents the essential subject of everything. For Schopenhauer it follows that the subject of cognition can never be cognized in terms of an object or as representative imagination. Moreover, since all cognition naturally requires a cognized as well as a cognizing part, the cognized as such cannot be the cognizing but must be the willing, the subject of willing, the will.

This fundamental Schopenhauerian tenet owes its peculiar epistemological illustration to a second noteworthy biographical event

---

(1) From the Oupnek'hat, vol. I, p. 202; see Schopenhauer, Wurzel, pp. 158-160.

(2) Schopenhauer, Wurzel, p. 17. He refers to the principle in its most general form: Nihil est sine ratione cur potius sit, quam non sit. (There is nothing which without reason should rather be than not be.) Having presented its two previously accepted aspects, the reasons of cognition and of becoming, he adds himself the two reasons of being and of action. Later he shifts the emphasis entirely in favour of causality as the one fundamental principle of all being, operating mainly with the corresponding concepts of will and cognition. Adapted and expanded into a second edition (1847) this book remained the introduction and basis of his main work.

which also took place in 1813: the orientalist Friedrich Majer made the young philosopher read Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron's Oupnek'hat, id est secretum tegendum, which represented a Latinized translation of a Persian version of 50 mostly original Sanskrit Upanisads.(3) These were to have a life-long impact on him. Their Latin form certainly suited Schopenhauer's romantic sense for detached scholarly universality. It may even have attributed a quasi-classical philosophical status to those metaphysical Indian secrets. Schopenhauer's India - a source of wisdom isolated in time - soon became integrated in the formlal basis of his classical-modern world outlook as its third element, next to Plato and Kant. Remaining largely unaware of the mechanics of the fundamentally different Indian tradition throughout his life, he entirely ignored the hermeneutic question. Schopenhauer shared a generally Eurocentric attitude(4) with predecessors such as Hegel or his own early followers, as we shall see here and in some of the following chapters. But he had access to an ever-increasing number of translations of Indian texts in modern European languages as well as essays and reports on India, of which he made careful use as his work progressed.(5)

---

(3) Seillière (Schoph., p. 10), Schwab (Ren.Or., p. 65) and Gérard (Orient, p. 218) indicate the year 1813, von Glasenapp (Indb., p. 68) makes it 1814, in any case after his return to Weimar, which means after he had accomplished his dissertation (cf. Pisa, Schoph., pp. 258-259).

(4) This is not affected by his explicit awareness of the "nebulous" and "Europeanized" renderings of most of his Indian texts, from which he exempts the Oupnek'hat as trustworthy, likewise Schlegel's Bhagavadgītā and "some places in Colebrook's translations from the Vedas" (PP. II, p. 437 (§ 184)).

(5) For the general history of Sanskrit literature at the time see Schwab, especially pp. 57-63, 96-107. Schopenhauer himself includes among his main references: Isaak Jakob Schmidt, Über das Mahayana und Pradschna-Paramita; Institutes of Hindoo Law (1794); Heinrich Julius Klaproth, "Bhaguat-Geeta - Gespräche zwischen Kreeshna und Arjoon" in Asiatisches Magazin (1802); "Fragments Bouddhiques" in Nouveau Journal

The centre piece of Schopenhauer's work, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung,[6] was essentially completed in 1818. However, his pungent criticism of human nature in combination with the demuding characterological wit,[7] with which he penetrates to the metaphysical ground of his reactionary view of the world, helped to shut out for the greater part of his life a much desired popularity as a philosopher.[8] Another undeniable obstacle for him consisted in the domineering philosophical presence of Hegel, his senior by seventeen years. The unknown Schopenhauer had clashed with the famous "state's philosopher" at the University of Berlin in 1820, when he was aspiring to a professorship there himself; thereafter he would

---

asiatique (1831); Henry Colebrooke, "Essay on the Vedas" in Asiatic Researches, vol. VIII (1805); "Essays on the Philosophy of the Hindus" in Miscellaneous Essays, vol. I (1833); Mad. Marie-Elisabeth de Polier, Mythologie des Indous (1809); August Wilhelm Schlegel, Bhagavad-Gita (1823); F.H.H. Windischmann, Sancara, sive de theologumenis Vedanticorum (1833); Horace Wilson, Sankhya Carica (1838); Eugène Burnouf, Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhism (1844); Spence Hardy, Eastern Monachism (1850); Manual of Buddhism (1853); Jean-Baptiste-François Obry, Du Nirvana Indien (1856).

(6) I.e. The World as Will and Imagination. For the implications of Vorstellung see p. 65.

(7) Lips (Physiog., pp. 11, 20) reminding us that for Schopenhauer physiognomy is an expression of the will and, therefore, a key to man's character, states: "Through his fundamental view he defined the basic law of modern characterology." For our further analysis we shall parallel the notion of an individual characterology by that of a cultural characterology (as in Spengler and Gebser).

(8) Only in 1844 a second edition of Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung appeared, extended by a second volume, and in 1859 a third edition. Finally, with the publication of Parerga und Paralipomena in 1851, began what with some amusement he called "the comedy of my fame" (Pisa, Schoph., p. 351).

expose Hegel as his philosophical arch-enemy.[9] When in his final years his own work came to be read and accepted, as he noticed with great gratification, he had not only made a fundamental contribution to the promotion of Indian thought in the Western world, but he had also bequeathed to the history of philosophy a noteworthy phenomenon: the association of Indian thought with German pessimism. In countless superficial remarks the cliché of "pessimism" in Indian thought has travelled well beyond Schopenhauerian boundaries.[10] Since Schopenhauer is the leading figure of our historical comparative analysis, we shall try to establish a representative view of the nature and development of metaphysical pessimism in German thought, and follow the roots of a selection of significant Indian conceptions which are reflected by it.

Schopenhauer, like our other representatives of German pessimism, nourishes his thought from some bilateral cultural interrelationship, which was not entirely devoid of romantic motivations.[11] Historically speaking, he mediates between various exponents of German philosophy (which tends to link itself to the thought of the ancient Greeks) and sections of the Indian tradition.[12] We intend to look at this complex

---

(9) Seillière (Schoph., pp. 78, 82) explains that Schopenhauer rejected such "sophists" as Hegel because they did not share his romantic sensitivity for "what contemporary psychology likes to call the unconscious". The eventual "discovery" of Schopenhauer is highlighted by John Oxenford's essay "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy" through which Schopenhauer becomes widely recognized as the great challenger of Hegelianism (Pisa, Schoph., p. 353).

(10) Cf. Radhakr., Phil.I, pp. 49-50, 146-147, 365; Gérard (Orient, p. 220).

(11) Willson (Ger.Rom., pp. vii-x) explains that the romanticist was uniquely equipped to search for a common origin of religion, language or art because, generally, he was historically oriented and philosophically moved to elaborate on grand human themes. He includes Hegel and Schopenhauer among the "romantic philosophers" with regard to the Indic ideal - in his eyes "a summary of romantic aspirations" - as it was perceived by them.

(12) Gérard (Orient, p. 215): "Schopenhauer is the first Occidental philosopher who tried to naturalize Indian philosophy in Europe."

interrelationship in terms of an objective historical process. With a view to the natural ramifications of this process it would be unrealistic to grope for any precise chronological order of philosophical interaction. In principle and to begin with, we simply observe that all our Germans admit, positively or negatively, a strong sense of historical succession. The reactions of Gebser and Spengler, back to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and his followers, Hegel and Fichte, and Kant, avow their predecessors as historical antecedents. (Schopenhauer, who remains philosophically very a-historical,[13] still expresses a distinct desire for recognition, for disciples and for followers.) It is this inner attitude in our thinkers, regardless of their own philosophical apperceptions and prejudices, which is of objective significance for us.

Schopenhauer himself indicates as his philosophical masters "the astonishing Kant" and "the divine Plato", with whom he soon associates "the benefits of the Vedas", even predicting an Indian renaissance in Europe comparable to the one which revived ancient Greece.[14] Kant (1724 - 1804), in lecturing on India, had only shown some moderate socio-geographical interest in it.[15] But Hegel (1770 - 1831) who, historically speaking, occupies a position somewhere between Schopenhauer and Kant, already manifests a distinct philosophical opinion about the Indians, which in some respects appears quite compatible with that of Schopenhauer, although in rather the opposite sense. Here, in Hegel, culminates the pre-history of the culturally bilateral philosophical interaction which concerns us.

---

(13) "He evicted time from himself" (Nietzsche, Schoph., p. 30).

(14) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, p. 11. In 1841 Edgar Quinet establishes the term Renaissance orientale, as Schwab reports (Ren.Or., pp. 18-21) tracing the concept back to Friedrich Schlegel (1808).

(15) Ignorant of any particular line of Indian thought, Kant (in anticipation of Hegel) assumes that the Indians will forever remain incapable of any philosophical thinking in abstract concepts (see von Glasenapp, Kant, p. 43; Indb. p. 9).

Hegel, himself in opposition to the then fashionable romantic India enthusiasm,[16] is one of the main philosophical figures of Schopenhauer's cultural heritage. Schopenhauer reacts to Hegel, and both react to India. This fact allows us to intensify the contours of Schopenhauer's India image by contrasting it with some of Hegel's typical views on the spirit and thought of the Indians. Schopenhauer is consistently opposed to Hegel, although this is nowhere expressed in any point for point argument. Their philosophical approaches are, in principle, quite reversed. Schopenhauer's physiognomically talented mind has, since his adolescence, tried to understand the unknown by intensifying the knowledge of the known.[17] Proceeding from reality to the idea, Schopenhauer finds himself in fundamental opposition to Hegel, who moves from the idea to reality.

Hegel's true object of history, the state, in Europe represents the perhaps ultimate achievement of historical reality which includes the reality and realization of the individual, whereas in India it exemplifies for him only a preliminary stage in this process.[18] Historically committed to a unilinear concept of time, Hegel raises the question of India's role in universal history: "Which is the position

---

(16) Von Glasenapp, Indb., p. 59.

(17) Pisa (Schoph., pp. 125-128; 197) mentions his early characterological observations on prisoners and hanged people, and the resultant metaphysical impulse. According to an oft-quoted autobiographical line (Nachlaß, IV.1, p. 96, § 36) Schopenhauer himself noted: "In my 17th year, without any learned education, I was so affected by the misery of life as was the Buddha when, in his youth, he saw illness, old age, suffering and death."

(18) Halbfass (Indien, p. 109) reckons that Hegel's interest in India demonstrates - irrespective of his "dictatorial self-confidence" - that the phenomenon of his combination of system and history, the historical summing-up and the suggestion of a possible "termination" of history, is no coincidence at a time of "new dimensions of access to the extra-European traditions".

of India's manifestation (Gestalt) in connection with the continuous development of the idea?"[19] And he answers that, notwithstanding India's geographical and linguistic links with the rest of the world, "here is no room for reason, nor for freedom". In Schopenhauer's view both reason and freedom appear as functional expressions of his fundamental concept of will which, as we shall see in due course, he is eager to support with any possible reference to Indian philosophy.

From Hegel's point of view in India the will becomes internalized, giving rise to a spiritual world and a form of idealism which perceives the world by dissolving the sensual element into thought. He writes: "This idealism does in fact exist in India, but only in a conceptless, reasonless form, ruled by mere phantasy, without any freedom, mere dreaming - taking its origin and its material from the world of existence, but only to turn everything into phantasy; because, even though such phantasy may appear as being pervaded by concepts and the play of thought may find its way in, such combination happens only at random. Morality, reason and subjectivity are dismissed and the uninhibited power of imagination, vested into sensual pleasure on the one hand and in the total abstraction of internalization on the other hand are the extremes between which the Indian jumps back and forth."[20] In short, will evolves through a sensual level to an abstraction of internalization. Between this final level and the mediating sensual level a wild process of thought and imagination takes place, which is responsible for the Indian state of mind, as Hegel sees it. "For the Indians the present and the existing dissolve into colourful dreams." Moreover, "they are completely unaware of lying. You can trust their written texts as little as their verbal accounts."[21] (This type of

---

(19) Hegel, Vorl.II, p. 343.

(20) Hegel, Vorl.II, p. 351.

(21) Halbfass (Hegel, p. 121) comments that Hegel "who does not recognize the foreign, the heterogeneous, as foreign, does not accept alternatives as alternatives", but incorporates and comprehends everything as a constituent and presupposition of his own thought;

socio-psychological judgement has been elucidated with great insight by Jean Gebser, who finds in India a polar parallel and equivalent to Europe instead of Hegel's historical preliminary. See Chapter Five.)

Hegel's main argument against the Indians insists that their thought is nothing but a play of imagination or even dreamlike folly. Within his generally optimistic conception of a universal historical process - a piece of shameless philosophical nonsense, from Schopenhauer's point of view - Hegel reserves some space for a pessimistic verdict on India: not being aware of, or being incapable of seeing, one's own ignorance is a fact which could allow us, in accordance with Hegel and certain followers of his, to deduce suffering. This important point shall occupy us again in connection with Buddhism (Chapter Seven). Conversely, Schopenhauer, who integrates the Indian concept of imagination in his own way, treats it as one of his most significant and philosophically valuable principles. Imagination (in terms of mayā) plays, of course, a central role in Indian philosophy, one of which the Indian thinkers are highly aware (see Chapter Eight, Vedānta). Hegel's manner of splitting the subject and its objects naturally antagonizes Schopenhauer, who very coherently unfolds the countless principles of our imagination along the lines of causality. Indeed, Hegel is trying to expose a deficiency of the Indian mind when he teaches that "this separation of the subject from the object and the objects from each other does not exist for the Indian".(22) Consequently, also, "the divine has not become individualized into the subject, into concrete spirit....There is no reason in these things and no connecting continuity of cause and effect, just as there would be no firmness of free individuality, personality and freedom". As we show below in more detail, Schopenhauer somehow senses the essential continuity in Indian

---

nevertheless, we should recognize that "Hegel's reflections on the relationship between system and history of philosophy" are, positively or negatively, relevant for the hermeneutic foundations of contemporary "Comparative Philosophy".

(22) Hegel, Vorl.II, pp. 353-354.

philosophy - and promptly explicates it through his own Weltanschauung. (The problem of assessing the criteria of an Indian category of individuality has been given some space, too, in connection with Gebser's interpretation of the Indian personality, pp. 172-174.)

Regarding the religious element in India, Hegel wonders "how a nation so deficient in spiritual substantiality can become aware of the highest being, of the truly substantial thing".(23) From his point of view, "nowhere on the higher plane can their mind reach a fixed point; although making the attempt it staggers back into its finiteness....In this state of staggering the other extreme, namely that of the highest abstraction, may be found simultaneously. Inasmuch as the general is something abstract the awareness of the self does not find a free relationship to it; because only by knowing that it is related to God, does it know that it is also contained in it, thus being free. However the Indian consciousness can only relate itself to God negatively; the complete denial of itself must appear as the highest thing to it.... Assuming a negative character at this point of culmination it represents a disaster." The principle of disaster consists, according to Hegel, in the pure abstraction of the brahman through which all concreteness disappears, which is "the knowledge itself in its utter emptiness". Practically, rising to this "negation of everything" means for him to empty one's consciousness. In Hegel's analysis this represents the type of freedom to which the individual self is restricted on the Indian level. He comments on this interesting psychological observation only in terms of an "abstraction of the pure self-denial" or "the annihilation of the real self-awareness", without indicating any of the mechanisms which, from an Indian point of view, may underly such change in consciousness (see Part II). Schopenhauer, who logically rules out such an absolute nothingness, nevertheless shows us the structures of negation. In his own philosophy of an imagined, but intrinsically suffering world, he permanently advocates its radical negation, presenting the metaphysical principles of this act in reverse by

---

(23) Hegel, Vorl.II, pp. 398, 396, 402, 404.

revealing the path of causality - in a manner which the ancient Indians would have appreciated, as he believes.

We shall now expose the most fundamental of these principles - such as the will, illusion, suffering, or negation - in order to show to which extent they may really play a role in Indian philosophy. In addition, they shall also serve us as reference points when we come to explore the Indian views of our other contributors to pessimism.

(2) The world as will and imagination

In his main work Schopenhauer expounds one thought, and only one, as he emphasizes. He wants to make his reader understand that the essence of this world is will and imagination. Rejecting an approach which would simply proceed from a more basic level to a more specific one, he decides to centralize this thought and to let his view of the world evolve around it in such a manner that each part should support the other parts in virtually any feasible direction. This circular form of his work reflects that the will's cycle of connected manifestations means endless suffering - unless broken by negation.(24) Schopenhauer strictly denies that he derived any of the fundamentals of his own thought from the Upanisads. Rather, these "fragmentary remarks", as he calls them, could be read as if they were concluding statements from his own, more thoroughly structured views (compare p. 10). "But if my reader has been blessed by a knowledge of the Vedas, the access to which, as opened up by the Upanisads, being in my eyes, the greatest privilege which distinguishes this still young century from the previous ones", Schopenhauer asserts eagerly, "then he is excellently well equipped to hear what I have to say."(25)

"The world is my imagination." Schopenhauer regards this statement, at the time not unknown in Europe and India, as relevant to all understanding (cognizing) creatures, although only man in his

---

(24) Schopenhauer (P.P.II, p. 112, § 69) revolts against the endless suffering in "millions of living but frightened and tortured creatures, all only existing for a while by eating one another".

(25) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, p. 11.

reflecting, abstracting capacity, i.e. as a philosopher, can become aware of it: not he himself perceives the surrounding world, but only his senses, according to whose perception he then shapes his own imagination.(26) This is, for Schopenhauer, the most basic truth a priori, a discovery for which he praises Kant.(27) It states all possible and imaginable experience in the most general form, more general than according to time, space or causality. These forms of experience are all featured by a division into object and subject as the prerequisite for any kind of imagination, abstract or intuitive, pure or empirical (in contrast to Hegel's approach). For the principal discussion of the world as imagination he abstracts from his other essential truth, the world as will. He considers any third type of reality, such as Kant's thing as such in the role of an object as such, as absurd. The world as imagination is constituted of two intimately connected, yet clearly differentiated halves: the object, the form of which is time and space, therefore plurality, and the subject, which exists whole and undivided in every single individual and outside of space and time. Due to the indivisible nature of the subject the world as imagination would cease to exist if only one single individual diappeared. (This suggestion has been developed further in Mainländer's solipsistic outlook; see Chapter Three.)

Schopenhauer feels that "the age-old wisdom of the Indians" supports his view of relative existence: "It is māyā, the veil of deception, which deludes the eyes of the mortals and lets them see

---

(26) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, p. 30; he gives Bishop Berkeley full credit for the explicit statement of this observation; in addition he refers to W. Jones, "On the Philosophy of the Asiatics", in Asiatic Researches, vol. IV, p. 164: "The fundamental tenet of the Vedanta school consisted not in denying the existence of matter..., but in contending that it had no essence independent of mental perception; that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms."

(27) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, p. 32. Compare Kant (Kritik, pp. 20-21): "We can a priori know about things only what we ourselves put into them."

a world of which one can neither say that it exists nor that it does not exist: it resembles the dream, resembles the reflection on the sand which the distant traveller takes for water, or also the thrown-away rope which he takes for a snake."(28)

Our perception is not just sensual, but also intellectual. Our intellect derives the understanding of the cause from the perception of the effect, a fact which presupposes the law of causality, the understanding of which Schopenhauer considers a prerequisite for any mode of viewing, hence for any sort of experience. (He thus refutes the previous opposite view that the understanding of the law of causality depended on experience, i.e. Hume's scepticism.) The senses can merely pick up certain data and only when the intellect understands the cause underlying the effect does the world arise, spread in space and changing in time, united by the intellect. Since this world as imagination exists only <u>through</u> our intellect, it also exists only <u>for</u> our intellect. The real existence of imaginable objects, i.e. their empirical reality, is identical with their active nature (<u>Wirken</u>) beyond which nothing can be cognized. But, since all causality is only in and for the intellect, this real (<u>wirklich</u>), acting (<u>wirkend</u>) world cannot exist without it. This as well as the fact that the object cannot be imagined without the subject lets Schopenhauer deny any reality of the exterior world independent of a subject. For him the entire world of objects is and remains imagination and, therefore, depends on the subject, or, in other words, has transcendental ideality.(29)

Thus, with regard to this speculative approach the question of reality loses its actual significance. But we are presented with an empirical approach. We have dreams. Is not perhaps our whole life a dream? The short dreams in our life and the long dream, life itself, might essentially be the same thing. Schopenhauer admits that, like Plato or the Indian thinkers when they refer to <u>māyā</u>, he feels that there is an intimate relationship between life and dream.

---

(28) Schopenhauer, <u>W.W.I</u>, pp. 34-47.

(29) Cf. Kant (<u>Kritik</u>, pp. 387a-400a) on transcendental ideality.

Looking further into the nature of deception, Schopenhauer asks himself how the intellect (featuring man and animal) or reason (featuring man alone) can go wrong. Just as reason, which should allow us to see the truth, can be deceived by error, so can the intellect, which should allow man or animal to see reality, be deceived by illusion. Such illusion comes about when the same effect can be produced by two entirely different causes. The intellect when left without any distinguishing data on these causes, as a rule decides for the more common one. Schopenhauer uses the popular example of the refraction of a stick held in water. The intellect will stubbornly refuse to see the stick straight, and only our reason knows it is.

In explaining his idea of "the world as will" Schopenhauer draws on Kant who had declared that time, space and causality were not features of the thing as such, but only of its appearance.(30) The world as imagination, on which Schopenhauer's epistemology is centred, as we saw, represents only one side of the world, the outer side. The inner side, the metaphysical essence of the world, is the thing as such, which, according to its most direct manifestation, he calls "the will". This will is the knowledge a priori of the body (while the body could be called the knowledge a posteriori of the will). Will and action are only different in our thinking, although, in fact they are one. This identity of will and body has to be moved from our direct awareness of it, i.e., from its concrete understanding (cognition), into the knowledge of our reasoning, i.e., into some abstract understanding. This will-body identity cannot be proved; it has to be experienced at a point where we cannot yet clearly discern subject and object.(31)

---

(30) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, p. 61, 137-158, 202, 218; W.W.II, p. 376. Compare Kant (Kritik, pp. 70, 76, 401a-406a) on space and time; he also says (p. 28) that the law of causality applies for the object only as appearance, but not as thing as such, i.e., the will cannot be free when it appears in visible actions, but only qua thing as such.

(31) Weininger (G.u.Char., p. 125) gives a detailed characterological description of conditions surrounding this common experience, using

This allows us to interpret each single individual, and thus the whole world, as the objectification of the will.

The will as the thing as such has itself no cause; only its manifestations must follow the law of causality. The will itself is also free of plurality or any abstraction of it, but it should be seen as the one thing which exists outside time and space which in turn constitute the principium individuationis, i.e., the possibility of plurality, on which depends, in a Kantean sense, the whole phenomenon of the world. Due to its causeless nature the will has been considered free. From this it has been concluded - but wrongly, as Schopenhauer points out - that its manifestations, including human actions, should also be free. However, they are bound to follow some cause, regardless of our personal awareness of our unmanifested free will. This leads, as Schopenhauer observes, to a peculiar human predicament: the fact that everybody thinks a priori that he is free in all his actions and, hence, could change himself at any instant. Yet a posteriori, through experience, he realizes that he must put up with his own character until the end of his life and that he is forced to play his role to the end.

The will, though it may freely manifest itself in nature, is essentially blind. Only in the case of the human being, where a brain has been developed together with the power of reasoning, does the world arise as imagination. It suddenly presents its second side, with all its aspects: object, subject, time, space, plurality, and causality. The will, so far blind, has now kindled itself a light, as Schopenhauer puts it. This is why the cognizing subject can - and must - see the world as imagination. Hence, we are advised to understand that the world throughout is will and imagination together. This imagination, presupposing the object and the subject, is therefore relative. After total abstraction from all these forms, only the will, the thing as such, remains. The will itself does not want anything, since causes and ends only exist in the objectified world. For Schopenhauer man himself is

---

his concept of the "henid" (die Henide) to designate the simplest psychical datum immediately before mental analysis sets in.

essentially nothing but will which strives endlessly and without any aim. The individual will may see a purpose with regard to here and now, but never in general. The totality of will is purposeless. The only self-knowledge of the will as a whole is the imagination as a whole, i.e., the entire objectified world which mirrors and reveals it.

This allows us to qualify Schopenhauer's māyā as a principle of individuation which has a relatively subjective function within the sphere of causality, as compared to Vedāntic māyā which, sharing the universal nature of the brahman or, at least, being intimately related with it, appears as a far more objective principle (compare pp. 271-274). Schopenhauer's māyā stands between the subject and the object. Without māyā there is no such division. It allows, and even forces, the subject to see the object. On a universal scale the totality of Schopenhauer's world of imagination mirrors the will, enables the will to see itself, i.e. to produce its own universal self-knowledge. However, this is not the will's natural immanent seeing of itself (which does not exist), but only a relative and restricted seeing within the world of objectifications, something which happens on the level which marks the subject-object division.

Whenever it happens that a person is so engrossed in his contemplation of a certain object that he actually forgets himself (his own individual will), and that he only remains aware of the object, then the two have, so to speak, merged into one, says Schopenhauer. Through such an experience the thinker realizes that the world and all objective existence rest on him alone and completely depend on him. He draws nature into himself as if it were an accessory of his own being. Schopenhauer finds this fact appropriately expressed in the Oupnek'hat where it says: Hae omnes creaturae in totum ego sum, et praeter me aliud ens non est. (All these creatures together am I, and besides me there is no other being.) Asking us to look at our own suffering as actually representative of the fate of mankind, he adds a similar quotation, now rather popular, which he draws directly from the Upanisads: Tat tvam asi. (That art thou.)(32)

(32) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 232-235, 265, 280, 442.

Wherever there occurs suffering in this world, reaching its most terrible stage in the suffering of humanity, we witness the manifestation and inner conflict of one single blind will. In the case of some rare individuals this suffering may help to reach a point of insight where the mere appearance of the world, the veil of māyā, as Schopenhauer likes to refer to it, loses its deceptive power. With their understanding of the principium individuationis their egoism dies.(33) This achievement in turn has a quieting effect on the will. It brings about resignation, i.e., the rejection of life, and especially the rejection of the entire will to live. Schopenhauer believes that in the case of most people the deliberate destruction of the will could only be promoted through suffering (functioning so to speak as some epistemological force).(34) Similarly, someone who may have already accomplished the negation of the will would most likely resort to asceticism in order to maintain the achieved state, since negation does not necessarily coincide with death. Schopenhauer illustrates this view by using the famous analogy of the potters wheel which continues spinning for a while after the completion of the product.(35) Again, the Oupnek'hat appears to sum it all up in one line: Tempore quo cognitio simul advenit, amor e medio supersurrexit. (At the time when knowledge arrived, desire simultaneously left the body.) Schopenhauer uses this quotation to introduce the fourth and last part of his main work, in which he draws the ethical consequences.

Will as mirrored by life cannot be separated from it. As long as there is any will to live in us, we may be assured of our existence regardless of death. Hence suicide brings no salvation: everyone must

---

(33) Schopenhauer's awareness of this egoism which suffering purges (W.W.I, pp. 318-319) and death punishes (W.W.II, p. 594) is absolutely metaphysical.

(34) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 484-485.

(35) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, p. 473; his sources are Colebrooke, "On the philosophy of the Hindus", and the "Sankhya Carica by Horace Wilson".

exist in accordance with his innermost will. The individual can be destroyed, however, his will to live cannot. Schopenhauer sees this suitably symbolized by the Indian trimurti Śiva, Viṣnu and Brahma, which he interprets as the destructive, preservative, and creative aspects of the same will in man. We may just as well say that nature couln't care less for the life and death of the individual. Schopenhauer feels that this is the message which he shares with the Bhagavadgītā, as phrased in the dialogue between Kṛṣna and Arjuna. Moreover, a naive and simple man like Arjuna, someone who originally has a positive outlook on the world, who has not fully realized that the predominant side of life is suffering and who has not yet been deterred by it, may be comforted by learning that any fear of death is paradoxical. He could calmly face death once he has learnt that it can never affect life, the very form of the will to live. He then knows that the present always is and that death is only a product of māyā.(36)

The opposite, the negation of the will, must follow when understanding begins to quiet the will until eventually the will negates itself. The individual, himself only a manifestation of the will, cannot determine such a development. However, a certain subjective approach as he notices in the case of the yogin (compare pp. 290-291) would be acceptable.(37) The self-negation of the will depends on an inner understanding which comes about arbitrarily. It cannot be directly enforced, although it can be obviously influenced because it reflects the innermost relation between a person's understanding and his will. No methodical egoism, a response to motives, could ever result in this understanding. Schopenhauer here presents the only direct expression of the freedom of will, which he liberally equates with what the Christian mystics call the state of grace (compare p. 188(19)). He suggests that we may avail ourselves of the philosophical approach as the best possible way to understand at least the position of someone who in the most direct and intimate form realizes that all life is suffering. It is the way of the saint and ascetic which is significantly determined by an inner,

---

(36) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 347-360 (§ 54), 493, 555.

(37) Schopenhauer, P.P.II, pp. 441-442 (§ 189).

direct and intuitive kind of understanding. But on a very general level, everybody has an intuitive, in other words concrete, manner in which he is aware of all philosophical truth. This is why Schopenhauer declares it the special (and essentially the only) task of the philosopher to turn undifferentiated and potentially mystical insights into the abstract knowledge of reasoning.(38)

Schopenhauer, who compares himself to Plato who attempted to understand "the one in the may and the many in the one", describes his own philosophical task as a strictly theoretical one: as a profound mirroring, in abstract concepts, of the world, that is, everything that exists in man's consciousness. Without any historical concern or cultural differentiation, he contrasts his own theoretical approach, which proceeds by abstracting from life, with that of (self-exemplifying) practical reasoning as he finds it demonstrated, in its highest form, by the Stoic sage: the Stoic ethic primarily aims at happiness through equanimity and mental peace (ἀταραξία) which allows a person to remain practically detached from joy and pain. However, virtue is only treated as a means and not as an end in itself. Schopenhauer accepts the Stoic ethic as an honourable, perhaps relatively successful, attempt to use reasoning in order to lift man above the suffering which pervades all life. But ultimately he finds the eudemonistic ambition of wanting to live without suffering self-constradictory. He sees the Stoic in a philosophical cul-de-sac and, in contrast with the Indian thinkers, in ignorance of the deeper meaning of suffering. In his opinion Stoicism is fundamentally opposed to the teachings of the Vedas, Plato, Christianity and Kant. He feels much more impressed by the saintly ascetic world conqueror as he features in Indian or Christian thought, because here highest virtue and saintliness appear in the state of highest suffering.(39)

Granting us, at best, no more than a choice between physical and mental suffering, Schopenhauer writes: "Thus, it is obvious that,

---

(38) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 319, 385-389, 470-474, 499-502.

(39) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 124, 128-134.

like our walking which is only a continually prevented kind of falling, the living of our body is only a continually prevented dying, a constantly postponed death: and, finally, in the same manner the activity of our mind is a continually delayed boredom."(40) The world, in his eyes a great tragedy and comedy, is staged by the will at its own expense, and the will is also its own spectator. Justly, the will, in response to which all suffering exists, has also to bear this suffering ultimately. Hence, practically, the torturer who tortures others actually tortures himself.(41)

Schopenhauer considers his voluntarist conception of ultimate inner identity in perfect agreement with "the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom" which he feels his century has given to him in the form of the Upanisads.(42) But he admits that only the few who can truly, not just theoretically, relate themselves to other beings in the sense of the word tat tvam asi are on their way to liberation. For the common minds in India, this entire knowledge had to be vested in mythical form as metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls. He understands that the principle of reward according to this doctrine of reincarnation can only be expressed in negative terms: Non adsumes iterum existentiam apparentem. (You will not assume any apparent existence again. Compare Chāndogya Upanisad 8.15, p. 199.) Although Schopenhauer's level of indological information is relatively high, he is not yet in a position to make a principal distinction between Brahmanism and Buddhism. Accepting that liberation, in positive terms, may be described as a reunion with Brahma, he takes the same conception when referred to negatively for nirvāna, i.e. "a state where four things do not exist: birth, old age, disease and death". Carefully, he explicates the logical inaccessibility of this Indian conception of "nothingness" (against which Hegel had inveighed so drastically). No absolute nothing (nihil negativum), he says, could ever be imagined; within a broader view it must remain a relative nothing (nihil privativum). So-called nothingness, he consoles us, only looks frightening in respect to our

(40) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 389-390.

(41) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 413, 445, 487.

(42) Schopenhauer, W.W.I, pp. 442-443.

habitual state of being distinctly surrounded by something, and as long as we are not "there". Schopenhauer considers his own view to be notably in accordance with "the esoteric doctrine" of Buddhism "teaching not metempsychosis but some peculiar palingenesis (re-origination) on a moral basis".(43) He describes it as "disintegration and new formation of the individual with only his will persisting, which, in assuming the shape of a new creature, receives a new intellect". This is the idea, he feels, when tradition lets the Buddha say: "My disciples reject the thought that I am this and this is mine" (compare p. 231).(44) He argues that our empirical consciousness tends to be overconcerned with the loss of individuality, which is no true loss.(45) We are merely deceived by too narrow a perspective. From a metaphysical point of view we may see that the following two sentences mean basically the same thing: "I disappear, but the world goes on" and "the world disappears, but I go on".(46) Death provides the great opportunity to rid ourselves of our "ego", our individuality. During our life the will is unfree, since it has to follow our established character according to a specific chain of motives. This restriction ends when death comes: the will becomes free again. Freedom is in being (esse), not in doing (operari). It is to this effect that Schopenhauer feels advised by Windischmann's Latin speaking Śaṅkara: "Finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera evanescunt, viso supremo illo." (Having seen that highest thing, the knot of his heart is disentangled, all his

---

(43) Schopenhauer, W.W.II, pp. 589-590; P.P.II, pp. 299-300. Metempsychosis and palingenesis respectively are Schopenhauer's criteria for "exoteric" and "esoteric" Buddhism: the concept of "esoteric Buddhism" later plays a decisive role in Mainländer (cf. pp. 94, 96).

(44) Schopenhauer, W.W.II, p. 718.

(45) When an Indian thinker such as Radhakrishnan generally asserts that "it is clear that it is the false individuality that disappears while the true one remains", he ultimately uses a non-European category of identity (Phil.I, p. 449).

(46) Schopenhauer, W.W.II, pp. 594-596.

doubts are dissolved, and his works vanish. Compare pp. 265-266.)[47]

(3) The characterological roots of Schopenhauer's metaphysical pessimism

We have now to decide whether India served Schopenhauer as a general ground of departure, or whether he received certain initial impulses from there, or if, after all, he only used Indian philosophy as an instrument for strengthening and "proving" his own tenets. Our exposition has, so far, shown that his predilection for Indian concepts and ideas functions as a distinct integral force of his vivid, apodictic style. But the deceptive ease with which he arranges his support by Indian thinkers proves little regarding the essential starting-point of his pessimism. After all, had not Hegel, shortly before him, demonstrated an entirely reversed approach? Hegel's unilinear optimistic historical outlook wanted and required India as a negative prerequisite. Now, Schopenhauer's pessimistic enthusiasm extols Indian thought as a positive confirmation, if not source, of truth detached from time.

If we classify our thinkers in three categories, we could say that for some, such as Kant, historicity does not figure as a decisive part of their philosophizing, while others, like Hegel, represent the type of the historicist par excellence. Fichte, too, is very historical,[48] but not a philosopher of history, unlike Hegel (and Marx), the culturist Spengler, and, in a culturally even more "applied" manner, Gebser. Unlike all of them, Schopenhauer presents himself as the prototype of the anti-historicist. His rejection of history may have been one of the factors which led him to his Indian material. Like other European philosophers, especially Hegel, he forgets that India represents a tradition of its own. But while Hegel strings India up in his dialectical projection of progress like some homogeneous irrational event, Schopenhauer treats it as isolated in time and as a practical source of knowledge, free to become an ally in his anti-Hegelian, non-historical view of time, where time is a physiognomical aspect of

---

(47) Schopenhauer, W.W.II, p. 711.

(48) Cf., e.g., Fichte, Gott, pp. 28-32, "On our belief in an eternal continuation".

the will. (The question of the structural form of time never moves Hegel much; he rather ranks time as some natural condition comparable, perhaps, to the given geographical connectedness of Europe and India.) Schopenhauer opts principally for a more tangible approach to metaphysics, by operating as a characterologist and physiognomist. Subjectively, Hegel takes the time factor in history for granted, while objectively, Schopenhauer also is historically oriented, as his reactions to his predecessors and his anticipation of his own followers indicate. Subjectively, Schopenhauer treats time as an illusion, i.e., as an empirical segment in the ramified manifestation of the will. He uses no detailed strategy against Hegel, but he consistently accuses his popular colleague of philosophical meaninglessness or emptiness. Again we recognize a reversal. Schopenhauer reacts, perhaps deliberately, to Hegel's conception of an Indian will which precipitates phantasy and imagination into the disaster of "utter emptiness" whereas Europe has been privileged to enjoy the stage of ordered reason.

For Schopenhauer there can be only one will, a blind will which freely manifests itself in the empirical world. But there it binds itself in perpetual self-conflict and suffering, in nature, in society, in individuals. Everything that man, suffering, sees and feels - from sexual delusion[49] to intellectual deception - marks the physiognomy of our world, that is to say, the world as Schopenhauer sees it, the spectacle which involves him and to which he is so radically and so

---

(49) Schopenhauer (P.P.II, p. 673, § 369) says that all female beauty - shortlived, and designed by nature as some deceptive coup de théâtre - exists only in the male sexual drive; i.e., he ethically disapproves of the subject-object dichotomy underlying imagination (cf. pp. 233-234, the Buddha's warning of his monks to control their psychological responses to the appearance of the courtesan). Otto Weininger (G.u.Char., p. 298) observes a complementary relationship between the child-denying courtesan and the genius, determined by the principle of negation (also see below, p. 92(11)).

personally opposed, his self-determined destiny from which only negation can absolve him.

In principle Schopenhauer makes no difference between Brahmanism and Buddhism. However, on account of the Oupnek'hat he begins to present his own fundamental conception of the will in the light of the brahman. Unfortunately, there is no Indian equivalent. We shall show that this central Upanisadic idea did not influence the essence of his philosophy at all. Besides, the Upanisadic absolute would never have fitted into his outlook. His misapprehension, which eluded indological scrutiny at the time[50] and which he passed on to his followers, ought to appear understandable from a modern comparative point of view such as our own meta-position.

Both the brahman, or ātman, and the will function as the fundamental principle of all and every being. But, Schopenhauer's will is blind, whereas the brahman is the only thing which is not blind. (Brahma vidyā or jñāna means absolute and undeluded seeing. Compare p. 264.) The brahman and the will are real and they are free. (The "freedom of will", usually presented as a personalistic problem, is distinctly European; it is inherent and considered obvious in Indian philosophy.) Each, the brahman-ātman and the will, constitutes a primordial category around which, not within which, everything happens. Hegel, whose ideal is featureless, would have despised and rejected such "dualism". Schopenhauer, in turn, opposes his will as an entirely contentless power (imagination!) against exactly that aspect of culture which accepts and justifies the reality of suffering on the assumption of some ideal content, which philosophically Hegel (but also Fichte[51]

---

(50) Max Müller (Ved., p. 69): "These ideas are perfectly familiar to the authors of the Upanishads." Later thinkers such as Spengler and Gebser use their own equations and parallelisms.

(51) Cf. Fichte (Sel., p. 61): "The reason for all the suffering of human beings is their distraction by what is multifarious and changeable; the sole and absolute condition of the life of bliss is the realization of the One and Eternal."

and the other previous German idealists) represents to him. Gebser, in comparison, reacts very gently to Hegel (disparaging his dualism) by calling for an "integration" of older (including Indian) levels of consciousness (compare pp. 151, 158, 170).[52] Schopenhauer's will, combining different "outer" features, figures as his essential entity with some kind of negative condition. The source of its negativity shall be explained below, in connection with the principle of individuation. Besides, ontologically, the will and the negation of the will do not constitute any polarity. To Gebser this conception of negation signals a "level of deficiency". But he sees a significant polarity between the free will and the individual will (compare his "death pole", p. 164). The will in Schopenhauer is - relatively - bad, but fundamental. As compared to the ātman it may be seen as some anti-entity which also implies entity. If we designate the ātman as positive, the will would rank as negative, or, more pragmatically, as an entity which exists but has to be negated.

Regarding the second aspect of the will, i.e., the need to negate it, we make the important observation that in Buddhism there exists a subtle undertone of negation paralleling in some way that in Schopenhauer's thought. Namely, the Buddhist attitude towards the idea of the ātman is somewhat ambiguous: basically Buddhism does not recognize any such entity. But then, a noteworthy addition to this statement is made which says that the idea of the ātman is bad (compare pp. 59, 229(36), 231, 240, 254(73)). In the Upanisads it is difficult to distinguish what is a purely metaphysical entity (ātman) from what is only an idea thereof; in other words, idea and thing are the same. In Buddhism, however, the thing and the thought of the thing are separated.

This allows us to compare the will and the ātman (a) in their semantic function and (b) in their pragmatic function. Schopenhauer says: (a) the will is real and (b) it has to be denied. Buddhism says: (a) the ātman does not exist but (b) the idea thereof is bad. Buddhism

---

(52) Gebser, U.G., p. 50.

refuses to discuss an ātman: there is no such state of consciousness as "I". For Schopenhauer the will is real. Hence we may say that in principle the pragmatic attitudes in Buddhism (with regard to the ātman) and in Schopenhauer's thought (with regard to the will) are very similar. We could go further and say that his thought is paralleled by the ancient Indian philosophical attitude in general. More precisely, on the pragmatic level the will is treated in a negative sense, the ātman in a positive sense. (Intentionality may be implied in Buddhism, but not as a negative ontological category. Compare pp. 237; 238-245.) This shows that here metaphysics and philosophical pragmatism meet, an approach Hegel would have rejected. Only if we remain on the metaphysical level can we say that one can be will. Philosophical pragmatism, however, must abolish this view. The essential element of Schopenhauer's thought happens to reflect the Indian manner of passing from the level of metaphysics to the level of pragmatism and vice versa.

Schopenhauer's pragmatism stands on characterological grounds. The plasticity of his metaphysical expression reflects the physiognomy of his natural and cultural environment.(53) In a sense, Schopenhauer "decided" to become pessimistic, reacting deliberately to culture the way he did, not as an imperative philosophical conclusion. In other words, his characterology operates (morally and aesthetically) with cultural values. And the principal axiological stabilizer for his cultural reaction and outlook is his conception of the will (while his characterological stabilizer, as we shall see below, is māyā). The empirical pragmatism of Buddhism generates an a-cultural psychology with the Buddha as its main exemplifier. Schopenhauer's cultural reaction, his pragmatism, feeds his metaphysical pessimism: it calls for change on the basis of ontological negation. He advocates negation as some sort of metaphysical therapy (to do away with the preposterous evil that ensues from the structure of this world), not as an orientation point

(53) Stern (Studies, pp. 159-166) stresses the functional role of the aesthetic mode in Schopenhauer who uses his philosophically "transfixed experience" of this world as an operational parallel to the saint's exemplification of a pessimistic answer to life.

for some propaedeutic psychology as in Buddhism (which professes an attitude of change without any such metaphysical grudge). He wants to solve all problems by negating the will, whereas Buddhism simply wants to effect a stop in the production of such conditions as lead to suffering (see pp. 226-227). Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta advocates a psychologically similar attitude by assuming that transparence, through the right kind of knowledge (vidyā, jñāna), must lead to some kind of immunity against the delusions of the world. Schopenhauer's unpsychological restriction to a metaphysical solution is part of the cultural pessimism implied in his ethical pessimism. The other part is rooted in his restricted culture awareness. There is a distinct element of cultural influence in Schopenhauer's reaction, but since he is not aware of his cultural involvement, that is, of the role which culture plays in his reaction, he disregards any practical way of coping with his cultural problem. He merely makes the best of it as a civilized person and as a man of culture, in the idiomatic sense of the word.

Rephrasing Schopenhauer's metaphysical question, we could ask: if everything is bad, is it because it is an illusion (māyā)? Or, is there some primordial evil which preconditions illusion as its output? In short, is the evil in the illusion or in the will? When Schopenhauer says māyā, he thinks of illusion as a key principle in his conception of Vorstellung. This German term may be translated as "imagination" or "representative imagination". It can also mean an individual aspect of imagination. A Vorstellung does not necessarily have to represent another thing; it may also imply something like a perhaps futile imaginatory creation which one performs almost by mistake. Significantly, the Schopenhauerian concept of imagination reflects an element of delusive transformation or transformative wrong seeing, or, in short, delusion. Māyā, or the veil of māyā, is the deluding principle which lets us have, and even lures us into having, our countless Vorstellungen instead of perceiving the thing as such. With a view to this tight relationship Schopenhauer often refers to the Vorstellungen directly as māyā or illusion (Schein). But for Schopenhauer this illusory imagination is relatively real, although always wrong on some level or other, throughout the different types of errors and illusions as

classified by him. Māyā makes us see wrong, but in some coherent, organized manner. It stabilizes our physiognomical connection with the will. It is the principle which organizes the will's blind willing, which puts a veil of coherency over its innumerable individual objectifications. Schopenhauer's māyā is his principium individuationis (and Kant's phenomenon). Since it is secondary to the will it bears some of its characteristics. In general, it conforms with the Indian māyā, but in its Indian conception it extends also towards other human ideas and is not just reducible to Schopenhauer's principle of individuation.

Only one darśana, one Indian philosophical system, namely Vedānta, has produced a similar case of individuation. The Upaniṣads, in comparison, dwell on some ātman-brahman ontology which was never questioned before the first Vedāntins arrived. Individuality appears as a problem first in Vedānta. Buddhism, on the other hand, treats the self as a problem (the ātman is described as a bad idea). Individuality, in Buddhism, is ontologically marginal, but it ranks as one of the main categories of empirical consciousness. That is, it poses a practical rather than a theoretical problem. But in Vedānta the self, the ātman, is taken for granted, and individuality presents the chief theoretical problem. All Vedāntic thinkers knew that individuation was causally connected with illusion (māyā) or ignorance (avidyā). But in the beginning the problem was not solved negatively. Rather, individuation would be a universal category even when denied; i.e., tat tvam asi, as Schopenhauer himself quotes. At this point he may have been deeply influenced by Vedānta.(54)

---

(54) Schopenhauer may possibly have noticed the unique convergence of Vedānta and the British empiricist school of philosophy. Berkeley (Hu.Knowl., pp. 181, 212) says it is impossible to know the real existence and nature of things, their qualities being only ideas of the mind; Hume (Hu.Nat., p. 384) elaborates that our ideas are derived from correspondent impressions, which are no representations of any absent objects, but real perceptions in the mind which transfers the qualities onto the related objects. Schopenhauer, finding that empiricism ignores the law of causality as a presupposition, seeks metaphysical justification in Vedānta.

In Vedāntic thought, illusion is necessary and positive. It is precluded from any fundamentally negative interpretation. Śaṅkara and other Vedāntins treat māyā as a necessary prerequisite and system of truth, which accompanies all existence of matter and life. There is no appalling or disgusting aspect attached to it. It is divine play and it can be overcome in some positive manner. He likes to show how everything is open to one's drive to the highest happiness. Hence, relatively and as compared to Europe, where happiness is considered as some exceptional break in the unhappy course of events, Śaṅkara appears very "optimistic". But actually the Vedāntists, especially Śaṅkara, have no place for optimism or pessimism! (See Chapter Eight.)

Schopenhauer's idea of māyā was transformed from Vedāntic to overtly negative. As in Vedānta, it represents a deceptive force which veils the essence of the world. But, while in Vedānta the suffering too is part of the playful, even stimulating delusion through māyā, in Schopenhauer suffering mediated by the principle of individuation, is part of the objectification of the will. Schopenhauer's will is not without reality, despite its connection with illusion. However, the Indian counterparts of "will" and "individuality" are all without any reality, by definition.

For India the problem of suffering is a psychological one, and the Indian philosopher's task, which he exemplifies personally, consists in exposing what a cleared mind should be able to see once the principle behind all the empirical impulses has been unmasked. But Schopenhauer determines - metaphysically, and unaware of his personal role in collecting his evidence from culture - that suffering must lead to the existential negation of an intrinsically bad world which should not have existed to begin with. India seeks liberation from some modification of existence, not from the reality of existence as such. In the case of Vedānta we notice a positive orientation towards some absolute reality in terms of the ātman's ultimate identity with the brahman (jñāna as opposed to any brahman-ātman postulation). Hence, Schopenhauer's references to Vedāntic identity fall short of his idea of negation.

Buddhism, in comparison, responds negatively by trying to shortcut the consequences of man's fundamental ignorance (avidyā). Buddhism wants some sort of ethical balance between body and spirit. Our physical existence is not necessarily considered bad, but rather a nuisance. From a Buddhist point of view, the world exists as māyā, but māyā does not produce any wrong; only the clinging to the delusion of our own mind does so (see p. 241(55)). It is this empirical aspect of negation which is reflected in the concept of nirvāna, but Buddhism recognizes no such fundamental ontological principle as would conform to Schopenhauer's concept of will.

For Schopenhauer māyā is not an efficient cause for some ultimately irrelevant and unreal delusion; nor can he appreciate it as a motivating obstacle in finding a psychologically balanced state of consciousness such as one might associate with the conceptions of brahma vidyā or nirvāna. He rather treats it as a final cause of the perpetual self-contradiction and suffering inherent in all life and essentially in any individuated manifestation of the will. Life without suffering would be paradoxical, says Schopenhauer. Hence, we could refer to māyā as the principle of both individuation and suffering. The germ of suffering may lie dormant in the will, but through māyā it becomes real. This suffering is, in a way, the will's ultimate achievement, which only could be excelled by some total de-manifestation (which would mean negation). Both suffering and sufferer have to go.

Schopenhauer's will is useless as an abode of absolute knowledge or balance. It is characterized by a completely negative potential which, however, needs a level of māyā for its actualization. Schopenhauer may well have profited from some Vedāntic sponsorship, when through some deductive process he arrived at his concept of māyā. If we believe him, māyā has to be negative in accordance with the will. But this proves only what he wants to believe himself. The actual negativity which he implants in the will - thereby consciously or unconsciously reversing the principle of individuation - is induced from his own personal encounter with culture. His poignant characterological and physiognomical remarks about life criticize, of course, forms of life

as they appeared under the then prevailing cultural circumstances.

What we are saying is that Schopenhauer's principle of individuation works in two directions. Metaphysically, as he explicates, it makes suffering possible in making the individual self possible. But culturologically - and in a manner of which he may not have been too aware - it provides a mechanism through which observations made by or about the individual self can be channelled into the circular ontology of the will (p. 49)! Will stands for Schopenhauer's one great - and very personal - intuitive conception, the one point on which rests his undivided philosophical belief.

The metaphysical form of this belief must be considered as a product of his personal reaction to culture. Schopenhauer's metaphysical transformation of culture describes different degrees of deception but, in contrast to Indian thinking, it avoids considering māyā as such on different levels. Thus, he does not differentiate between subjective and objective forms of belief or imagination. India, on the other hand, is pragmatically very sensitive to the problem of handling māyā. From our meta-position we can therefore discover a purely external, i.e. conceptless, Indian attitude of pessimism toward any low level of perception, but with complete disregard for the phenomenon of culture. Schopenhauer does react to culture, but without consciously taking the culture factor into account, since he is too preoccupied with his notion of the self. He concentrates his entire cultural experience, which implies his philosophical experience (Hegel!), on his own personality. He is egocentric, but, metaphysically at least, not egoistic.[55] Schopenhauer's outlook requires a reaction against Hegel, but within this reaction he remains objective without betraying his metaphysical standards. Europe is personalistic in its outlook, as portended by such ancient thinkers as Socrates. This aspect later reaches ethnocentric dimensions: when Schopenhauer talks about "man's

---

[55] Hence, Frauenstädt (Briefe, p. 41) can look upon Schopenhauer's doctrine of world contempt as a compassionate reflection not of his own existential misery but of that of all beings.

imagination" he distinctly models it, with cosmopolitan devotion, after his own German outlook.

In addition, philosophy, in the European sense of the word, requires some alienated, split attitude. The philosopher must see people as being so provocative as to cause his alienation from them.(56) A flow of negative impulses is necessary. (Socrates, first loved by the people, achieved that alienation and was subsequently condemned.) In Schopenhauer's case the alien element is introduced through his cultural reaction which, while causing his inner detachment from the ordinary flow of events, asks at the same time for some form of mediation between the split parts, between his personal self and the world of individuation, between the suffering, including death, and the will to live.(57) But this mediation remains almost entirely metaphysical.(58) Schopenhauer looks at the rational, theoretical exposition of the metaphysical part as the consummation of his philosophical task. This ends where it touches upon the pragmatic level mentioned above (p. 64). Any practical

---

(56) As Stern points out (Studies, p. 189), for Schopenhauer the philosopher (like the artist and the saint) cannot be at home in a world considered as worthless except "as the subject-matter of his detached will-less contemplation".

(57) Zint (dopp.Bew., pp. 26-45) analyzes the motivating dualism of Schopenhauer's early concepts of an "empirical consciousness", which underlies his pessimistic view of everyday life, and an (ultimately negating) "better consciousness", which is reflected by aesthetical-ethical and religious-mystical insights, whose necessary philosophical interpretation centres on the "will" as a connective principle.

(58) Copleston (Phil.VII, pp. 274-275): "Schopenhauer's pessimism is thus metaphysical in the sense that it is presented as a consequence of the nature of the metaphysical Will. The philosopher is not simply engaged in drawing attention to the empirical fact that there is much evil and suffering in the world. He is also indicating what he believes to be the cause of this empirical fact."

negation would come about in suffering, or even as a corollary of suffering, especially when emphasized by renunciation and asceticism.(59)

Schopenhauer, who is motivated by his personal relationship with destiny (death is his inspiring guide and genius of philosophy(60)), protests ethically against this or, more precisely, his world. His metaphysical mediation, which conveys this protest, is based on some personalistic culture transformation. He is egocentric, but free of metaphysical egoism. His metaphysical awareness - he underlines the futility of any systematic egoism - assures his metaphysical objectivity, as we have noticed in his Hegel reaction. But, disillusioned with any positive philosophy, he tries with naive eagerness to reform, on the basis of his personal metaphysical potential.(61) This vocational

---

(59) Gérard (Orient, p. 232) compares succinctly: "For the Hindu, at least for the Vedāntin, asceticism permits to know the thing as such. For Schopenhauer, on the other hand, who knows it directly, asceticism only helps to do away with it."

(60) Schopenhauer, W.W.II, p. 542. Jaspers (Way, p. 36) explains that basic to all true philosophical thought is our changing consciousness of being, and he adds (pp. 23, 26) that "wonder, doubt, forsakeness...and experience of ultimate situations are sources of philosophy". Compare Spengler's and Gebser's experiences of fear, pp. 139(56); 168(48).

(61) The critical side of his metaphysics is not anti-cultural but a-cultural. On the anthropological level he anticipates Nietzsche who in rejecting Christian culture ("Gott ist tot", Zar., pp. 13, 92; "redemption from the redeemers", p. 95) actually reacts against his own immediate German protestant culture, dismissing traditional philosophy in favour of an exclusive "own way" (p. 195; Schoph., pp. 20-22). De Lubac (boudd., pp. 275, 279), in commenting on this Schopenhauerian-Nietzschean culture rejection, observes that Nietzsche who calls his Zarathustra the "Awakened" (cf. Zar., p. 12) actually makes him antipodean to the Buddha. Wagner just presents a cultural exaggeration, e.g., in his fragments of a Buddhistic opera, conceived under the influence of Schopenhauer: music representing the "twilight of the Brahmā world", leads from sansāra, the "day", to nirvāna, the night, the "truth" (br.Buch, pp. 176-178).

impulse makes him blind to his historical cultural indebtedness, i.e., to the historical mechanism of his culture transformation. He proves himself as a-historically minded: observing culture characterologically, he does not notice that his own psychological reactions, his sensitivity and eagerness, do not just come from his own bare self but also reflect axiological principles inherited from his culture. His metaphysical integrity, his metaphysical non-egoism and objectivity, of which he is aware, takes his attention away, however, from his own cultural egoism.

This self-centred eagerness (late urban egoism, from Spengler's point of view, and a symptom of cultural deficiency, according to Gebser), which protects Schopenhauer's philosophical independence and originality, also causes him to bend Indian thought towards his own ideas, or simply to misunderstand it on various levels. Bewitched by his own metaphysical achievements, he is not aware that India, objectively speaking, behaves culturally in some incompatible manner and that, subjectively, it does not even react to culture at all. Schopenhauer, though, implies such a reaction when, in his attempt to reform traditional German thought, he claims the ancient authors of the Upanisads as his philosophical antecedents. In his naive enthusiasm and perseverance, which were certainly prerequisites for his own individualistic creativity, he does not notice the relative casualness with which those rsis (to him "hardly imaginable as being merely human") just issue comments, from the height of their presumed state of liberation, in the course of communication with similar thinkers. Behaving as exemplifiers of some mystical level of insight, they literally seem to hand segments of their wisdom "down", whereas Schopenhauer is working his way up! He indicates little awareness of the non-personal orientation of the Upanisads (or of the ideal of action without interest, as in the Bhagavadgītā). His contribution to philosophy combines his ability to see culture physiognomically with his potential to consistently do it on the basis of individual suffering. In his egocentric culture transformation he turns, like other German romantic authors to India for fresh impulses.(62)

(62) Gérard (Orient, pp. 256-257) concludes that romanticism, sensing the loss of its cultural past and dreading an inevitable (scientific) tomorrow, seeks to attach itself to Oriental sources.

In his encounter with India, he treats it as if it were some other European philosopher, i.e., as a source of knowledge accessible on his own level and by his own standards - but without any hermeneutic. This makes Schopenhauer, who naturally represents our "centre of coordination", also our main exemplifier of German ethnocentrism. His course of egocentric originality combines with a line of ethnocentrically received Indian impulses.

The extent to which Schopenhauer develops new insights and new thought in response to Indian philosophy may be assessed according to various levels. Primarily, and on a very general level, he was clearly motivated and influenced by Indian thought. We can accept his response (much extolled by his follower Paul Deussen) inasmuch as it reflects his inspiration by the formal and aesthetical features. But hermeneutically Schopenhauer's appropriation of Indian content, in an attempt to support, justify and prove his own philosophical stance, remains problematic. Only certain isolated aspects as in the case of Vedāntic māyā are exchangeable and therefore valid as potential impulses (p. 66). In connection with such concepts as suffering or will, Schopenhauer feels strongly supported by Buddhism (especially in his later work), but, ignoring that Buddhism is essentially non-ontological, he draws the wrong conclusions for his own ontological outlook (compare pp. 68, 237). Neither is he aware that in India renunciation, asceticism or any break with society reflect merely an ethical social attitude without any transformation into some ethical concept of pessimism. India was no departure point for Schopenhauer, nor could it strengthen the conceptual content of his philosophy, although it obviously had a very stimulating influence on its form. In seeing himself as a protagonist of Indian philosophy, Schopenhauer was right only in terms of his cultural self-centredness from which originated also his main innovation: his redefinition of the individual in terms of suffering.

On the basis of his characterology of suffering, Schopenhauer transforms his personal socio-cultural perception of life into a metaphysical conception of pessimism. (He thereby clears a platform

for von Hartmann's eudemonological pessimism and Mainländer's solipsistic conclusions.) Of course, from an ontological principle of suffering alone we cannot deduce any pessimism (compare p. 245). But for Schopenhauer existence is getting worse; if not in a historical sense,[63] then with every new existential affirmation. Originally we may look upon his pessimism as a symptom of his inner attitude and a reflection of his own ideas, both in an existential and in an ethical sense, although without any culture awareness. Once this personal pessimism - comforted and confirmed by Indian forms - has received an impersonal metaphysical structure, Schopenhauer sees his own reflection from a distance. His metaphysical awareness, which keeps him suspicious about optimistic outlooks, makes him objectively pessimistic of his own perception (unlike Plato, p. 30).[64] At this stage, pessimism - essentially a cultural epiphenomenon - emerges as a purely metaphysical concept. But we do notice a teleological side-line in it (totally undeveloped, but later of central interest in von Hartmann's outlook): we receive no hint at all of any sign of progression, or even progress, in his conception of pessimism (after all, the Buddha returned liberated!). Here pessimism presents itself as emancipated from culture. In support of our thesis that metaphysical pessimism represents a transformed characterological reaction to culture, we shall now follow the Schopenhauerian impulse in three India-oriented German thinkers.

---

(63) He is not a historical pessimist, but rather serves as some landmark in later pessimistic views of cultural movement (Spengler, Gebser).

(64) Spengler (U.d.A., p. 475) determines morphologically: Schopenhauer's "dismay at becoming aware of his own (existential) knowledge - this is the root of his pessimism".

Chapter Three

Three Schopenhauerian thinkers: von Hartmann, Mainländer, and Deussen

(A) Eduard von Hartmann: pessimism as a post-Indian way to salvation

By the time of Schopenhauer's death in 1860 his conception of pessimism had begun to make its way into German thought, attracting responses from a variegated community of followers and opponents. One of the most noteworthy and careful students of Schopenhauer during that era was Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann (1842 - 1906). Having judged that critics of pessimism had so far largely followed rather soft and inconsistent metaphysical coordinates, von Hartmann appeared in 1880 with a comprehensive and systematic contribution "to the history and justification of pessimism" (Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus).[1] We shall show how he maps the pessimistic mainstream, before we follow his well-prepared search for Indian tributaries.

(1) Eudemonological pessimism: a scientific description

Declaring Kant, not Schopenhauer, as the "father of pessimism", he announces an objective, scientific description which would reveal

---

(1) This work represents a summary and expansion of his earlier reactions to the pessimism discussion in and around Germany at his time.

pessimism as "the indispensable firm basis for genuine moral philosophy and religion".(2) According to von Hartmann, Kant, in creating an autonomous moral philosophy, had to be opposed to any egoistic pseudomoral, or eudemonism, which in his eyes is the same thing. Rejecting any selfish self-interest, Kant wants a moral self-interest. Von Hartmann feels that this unselfishness of morality would have to include the complete renunciation of any positive happiness for this world and the hereafter. Morality and happiness, he points out, are neither identical nor can they be analytically derived from one another. Hence, there exists an antinomy between the two, which cannot be resolved with regard to the sphere of the world of appearances (in terms of space, time and causality). From von Hartmann's point of view, pessimism is the indispensable prerequisite which the moral consciousness needs as a presupposition for its self-defence. Kant's ethical idealism reveals to von Hartmann that pessimism - regardless of whether it may be the outcome of an investigation of the empirically given world or not - in any case claims absolute a priori validity as a necessary ethical postulate. He adds that treating pessimism a priori as a postulate of pure reason, Kant, who actually avoids the term "pessimism", abstained from any extensive coherent theoretical discussion of it on the basis of experience.

Having extracted Kant's observations on the subject, von Hartmann exposes them as the historical basis of that "pessimism" of indignation" (Entrüstungspessimismus) which links Schopenhauer with his followers.(3) Von Hartmann shows his awareness of Schopenhauer's personal ethical protest when he lets his pessimism be rooted in his

---

(2) Von Hartmann, Pessimismus, pp. VI-XV, 1-19. At some other occasion (Fragen, p. 34) he carefully draws a line between Schopenhauer and himself. However, while indicating empirical pessimism in Kant and the Christian view, he finds metaphysical pessimism, except in India, only represented in Schopenhauer (unseparated from empirical pessdimism), some of the latter's disciples and himself.

(3) Von Hartmann, Pessim., p. 27.

"indignation about the inadequacy of empirical reality with regard to the demands of ethical idealism". This aspect gives von Hartmann a certain right to identify Schopenhauer's pessimism as a practical attitude as distinct from philosophical theory (it is of course both, as we have shown). This attitude, he says, cannot replace philosophical pessimism. The philosophical theorist in turn is not interested in moral indignation, but in causal and teleological comprehension. From von Hartmann's point of view Schopenhauer has committed the fundamental mistake of deriving proofs for the evil nature of this world from pessimism. Von Hartmann himself propounds a teleological vision of some kind of endless, "asymptotical" reform of man's understanding of this evil. The reason why von Hartmann does not, as we have done, see and accept Schopenhauer as deriving pessimism from the evil nature of the world might be found in his insistence on some "scientific" approach. As it happens, his method ignores completely the role of those characterological data which, actualized by the culture factor, Schopenhauer channels into the metaphysical structure of his pessimism.

In the interest of his own approach, von Hartmann extracts from Kant a teleological, non-eudemonological evolutionism. On this he comments that "Kant's point of view then is an evolutionistic optimism which does not exclude but include eudemonological pessimism, although it leaves the moral pessimism of indignation, which it has overcome, behind".(4) The implications of this eudemonological pessimism are said to be, briefly, the following. Contentment, whether the eudemonological (what Kant calls the aesthetic or pragmatic) or the moral kind, is negative by nature. Remaining essentially unattainable, it would only amount to a negative state of freedom from all physical and moral suffering, or, in other words, a level of indifference with regard to pleasure and pain. Since this contentment would, at best, only negatively bring ease of mind, it would not produce any positive happiness. Having found that in the entire realm of the world of appearance life has a negative eudemonological value, von Hartmann likes to add, as a practical justification of pessimism, "that at

---

(4) Von Hartmann, Pessim., pp. 36, 42-43, 46.

least in the life of all individuals with a potential for morality happiness may be obtained neither outside morality nor through it".

Because as the senses become more refined they also become more susceptible to pain, von Hartmann reasons that happiness cannot result from any elaborate activities.(5) On an individual level this is reflected by an increasing personal discontent. Analogously we learn that on a social level discontent increases with cultural progress (also see Spengler, scepticism, p. 124). The more complicated and complex the structures of our ways of life become the more they give rise to unhappiness. The growing social refinement of our cultural development increasingly tends to burden the individual. Von Hartmann believes that historically speaking the balance tips more and more in favour of pessimism.(6) Drawing the consequences on an ethical level, von Hartmann concludes that this pessimism destroys all optimistic illusions. Furthermore, this ethical pessimism teaches (notwithstanding the high esteem we should have for the purpose of life) that life as such should be met with contempt, thus also destroying the naive fear of death.(7)

According to von Hartmann, Kant felt that mankind could only accept pessimism when it was embedded in transcendent optimism. When Schopenhauer in his outspoken manner revealed the essential pessimism of Kant's teaching, he was generally rejected. Nevertheless, von Hartmann himself frankly adds that morality or bliss are not possible in a transcendent sphere either. Therefore, he sees no reason to believe in a transcendent optimism, which would be contradictory in itself (and would constitute an even stronger pessimism than that of the phenomenal kind). In this connection von Hartmann observes that Kant (quite knowingly) could not solve the problem of a theodicy: no reason can justify that a personal, self-conscious, omniscient and omnipotent God has created creatures who would have better not been created. But, asks von Hartmann, why must the question be based on an untrue, optimistic

---

(5) Von Hartmann, Pessim., pp. 42, 46-47.

(6) Von Hartmann, Pessim., pp. 75-76.

(7) Von Hartmann, Pessim., p. 50.

assumption? Offering his own pessimistic approach, he suggests that we should ask ourselves how the absolute purpose or final cause of the world could possibly be imagined to lead without self-contradiction to such a world.(8)

Referring to the problem of the theodicy - "why did the creator not abstain from a creation of which he knew that it had to turn out evil" - von Hartmann explains that monotheism is paradoxical and preposterous, in fact synonymous with "monosatanism".(9) However, according to his own monistic view, evil - as an integral part of von Hartmann's culture perception - may be shared between the individual aspects and the absolute aspect of one subject. Pessimism, as we notice here, responds to the same deep inner cosmological paradox which the theodicy, having failed to solve it, indirectly admits and sustains.(10) If the transcendency problem prevails, the tendency toward pessimism develops. (The idea of a theodicy would be absolutely un-Indian.(11)

---

(8) Von Hartmann, Pessim., pp. 52-63.

(9) Von Hartmann, Rel.d.G., pp. 260-262.

(10) H. Heimsoeth affords a brief historical synopsis of this occidental paradox (Metaphysik, pp. 55-56): Plato, in defending the unity of the world, conceived of evil only as a mere lack of good, as a relative non-being, but not as a positive being and force. The "theodicies" of the Stoics and of Plotinus enlarge on this, and all later attempts, including those prompted by theological determinism, use their arguments. Finally Kant accepts the opposition of good and evil as fundamental in any finite being (whereas Nietzsche denies the existence of this moral-religious opposition altogether).

(11) When Wendy O'Flaherty (Evil) applies the term "theodicy" to Indian thought, she uses it, strictly speaking, as a meta-term. The "characters" (man, fate, devils, and gods, p. 13) which Indian mythology employs in its portrayal of evil are culturologically fundamentally different from any of the objects of genuine Schopenhauerian pessimistic characterology. Moreover, their role does not reflect any such ontological soul-God dichotomy as Leibnitz faced, optimistically and on a personological basis.

Similarly, from an Indian point of view, it would be impossible to deduce pessimism from a man-God relationship.) In some form or other, pessimism represents a principle needed to understand Schopenhauer, as demonstrated in von Hartmann's thorough-going response.(12)

Von Hartmann considers philosophical or theoretical pessimism, by which he means the tenet of the negative sum total of happiness, as an inductively gained true insight on strictly psychological, not metaphysical grounds. He tries to base the scientific treatment of the problem on the individual's personal inner experience of consciousness (as in all those philosophical disciplines which concern themselves with subjective phenomena), which needs as its axiological complement the analogous indirect experience in order to establish an objective and complete picture. In other words, von Hartmann consciously tries to match his private thought with that present in his own cultural environment and philosophical tradition. His manner of including indirect experience is crucial for the development of his entire pessimistic perspective, because he does not indicate any awareness of the different culture-specific ways of attaching meaning to experience and of conveying it. This is of fundamental importance when, in support of pessimism, he tries to extend his indirect experience(13) to such independent realms of Indian philosophy, as we shall see below. The combined inner (direct) and outer (indirect) experience (compare p. 14 and 14(16)) suggests to von Hartmann an inductive understanding of the causes of the general phenomenon that unhappiness (suffering) outweighs happiness. It is the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the will, the basis of life, in accordance with its psychological nature which provides the causes for the prevalence of unhappiness. These causes are seen as psychological, not metaphysical, i.e., they are found inductively through

---

(12) Replacing Schopenhauer's undifferentiated characterological perspective, von Hartmann's inductive view grades the "negative eudemonological balance of being as such" from empirical pessimism to metaphysical and absolute pessimism (Fragen, pp. 78-120).

(13) Von Hartmann, Pessim., p. 73.

inner experience.[14] (Von Hartmann claims the same validity for his inductively established pessimism as is accepted for the fundamental laws of physics.)[15]

Suffering, apart from its central function in von Hartmann's pessimism, is also said to have a beneficial influence on humanity inasmuch as it provides an opportunity for man to refine his moral potential and expand his moral consciousness. The general preponderance of suffering constitutes a conditio sine qua non for the developmental course of humanity which otherwise could not reach its ethical destination. Suffering constitutes a teleologically indispensable link in the cosmic system.[16] The conscious acceptance of suffering as an indispensable integral part of life may appear pradoxical. This seeming paradox is resolved when we realize that through our struggle (within our cultural development) the form of our suffering, although not its quantity, is changed towards an ethically more valuable one. This process, which gradually removes the objective sources of suffering, destroys the illusion that suffering comes essentially from outside and proves empirically that it comes as a consequence of the psychological element which forms part of the basic principle of life. Thus, having retracted the invincible source of suffering to our innermost self, von Hartmann feels that he has put us in the optimal position to understand the practical ethical significance of suffering. He classifies all outer sources of suffering (which should be destroyed) as only propaedeutic stages for this highest and final aim.[17]

---

(14) Ziegler (Hartm., pp. 113-114) rejects von Hartmann's inductive approach, arguing that philosophy cannot (metaphysically) accept a consciousness in terms of a psychological or physical phenomenon, since these two concepts themselves depend on consciousness.

(15) Von Hartmann, Pessim., pp. 80-82.

(16) Von Hartmann, Pessim., pp. 126-127.

(17) Von Hartmann, Pessim., p. 140.

(2) Mysticism, the unconscious and philosophy

Von Hartmann's scientific, inductive method, which leads us, through a psychological stage, to the level of the innermost self, ultimately touches upon a conception of the absolute for which he prefers to use the term "the unconscious" or das Unbewußte.[18] This unconscious is at the base of all direct or mystical knowledge (which for von Hartmann technically means the same thing).[19] This mystical knowledge, as he sees it, appears as spontaneous experience in our actual consciousness. Even those intuitive thoughts and feelings as they occur in the most ordinary psychological processes are in principle considered as mystical, because they are brought about by a direct intervention of the unconscious (regarding intuition see p. 22). "Since the consciousness knows that it has not received, either directly or indirectly, its knowledge from some perception of the senses, this being the reason why it appears as direct knowledge, it can only have originated as inspiration from the unconscious; thus we have understood the essence of the mystical: the filling of the consciousness with a content (feeling, thought, desire) by an unexpected appearance of the latter from the unconscious."

For von Hartmann every original philosopher (who does not merely thrive on inductive constructions) is a mystic inasmuch as he understands initially through an ingenious apperception which he then develops intellectually (whereas Schopenhauer draws a clear line between the mystical knowledge and its philosophical rendition; see p. 70). As von Hartmann says, the mystical as such has no form. Like anything which appertains to the unconscious, it becomes a content for our consciousness only when it has gone through a psychological process.

---

(18) Von Hartmann (Ph.d.U., pp. 3, 13-21), inspired by Schelling's unconscious, Hegel's absolute idea, and Schopenhauer's metaphysical principle of the will, introduces his own concept of "the unconscious" for the unknown positive subject, and especially to unite "unconscious will and unconscious imagination".

(19) For the mystical aspect of the unconscious see Ph.d.U., pp. 289-305 (Chapter IX).

In his opinion, philosophy tries to prove rationally what it has received mystically, thereby trying to make the private property of the mystic the general property of the thinking part of mankind. The rational proofs, having to draw on a mystical basis, may often be unsuccessful. They are most easily accepted by those who are capable of reproducing within themselves the author's presuppositions, such as Schopenhauer's conception of will, which von Hartmann accepts, adapts and integrates into his own central conception of the unconscious.(20)

Philosophy as von Hartmann understands it essentially concerns itself with one subject, namely, the relationship of the individual to the absolute.(21) As we learn, the union of the absolute and the ego (the individuality of which is effected by the consciousness), in other words, the union of the unconscious and the conscious, exists inseparably and indestructibly as long as the individual exists. Hence the historically so commonly attempted way of destroying the consciousness by letting the individual be absorbed in the absolute is erroneous (compare Gebser, p. 147). Erroneous, because its followers behave as if once their aim of the annihilation of consciousness (on which individuality is based) is reached, the individual would still persist: it is paradoxical that the ego may want to destroy itself and at the same time want to remain in order to enjoy this destruction. As is the case with Schopenhauer, von Hartmann's fundamental metaphysical commitment to the negative ontology of his own conception of will (which acts from within the unconscious) prevents him from approaching the problem of experience, or suffering, as ontologically and culturally neutral. Being preoccupied with his speculations about the metaphysical

---

(20) Von Hartmann, Ph.d.U., pp. 298, 303-304.

(21) Characterologically, von Hartmann only implies Schopenhauer's reaction to cultural physiognomy, proceeding directly from the will to the individual (Ph.d.U., pp. 213-214): "Will never appears without any motive...which always assumes the form of imagination....Hence, knowing how a person reacts to all sorts of motives, one knows the things which characterize him, and thus his character."

roots of his psychological observations, von Hartmann pays little attention to the possibilities of a structurally and functionally psychological basis of individuality and suffering. This is of special interest with regard to his interpretation of Indian thought.[22]

(3) Indian philosophy and religion

Von Hartmann, subscribing to a noticeably Hegelian perspective, makes the decisive assumption that historically in India religious awareness awakens before the single deities, being contemplated henotheistically, enter any noteworthy process of spiritualization. However, due to "the need for concreteness of such a low level of culture" as that of the Indians, the move attempted in Brahmanism towards an abstract monotheistic absolute principle remains unsuccessful. The monistic unity of this abstract spirit (which in his eyes is the strength of Indian religion), which presents as its subjective aspect the brahman and as its objective aspect the mahan ātman, is paid for by the abandonment of the truth of the reality of the many. Von Hartmann, who himself aspires to a concrete monism which, including and not excluding the reality of the many, must go through theism and abstract monism, explains what, in his opinion, happened in India.[23]

Māyā, originally the drive of the purely ideal thing towards self-manifestation, that is as an objective element within von Hartmann's absolute, later changes its role: no longer desire itself, māyā becomes the outer motive which evokes the desire. But this motive is "misleading, oppressive and causes one to leave the true being in favour of the untrue one". Due to the paradoxical roles which māyā as an object played (either contradicting from within or overriding from outside the absoluteness of the brahman, or the absolute unconscious will), it was removed from its relationship with the brahman and presented as a merely subjective principle of human thinking. This was facilitated by the view that the empirical world itself was only

(22) Von Hartmann, Ph.d.U., pp. 299-300.

(23) Von Hartmann, Rel.Bew., pp. 271-272, 277.

an illusion without any truth in it, owing its experience only to māyā, and being in opposition to the true and undivided quality-less brahman. If māyā was a subjective principle, man might hope - with the help of the brahman within himself - to understand more easily the individual aspect and, by overcoming māyā, understand his oneness with the brahman. This means that māyā moves in the course of the historical development of Brahmanism from the objective side to the subjective side.(24)

Abstract monism, as von Hartmann points out, does not truly explain where the individuals or the individual points of view of the world come from, since the unexplained duality of the māyā-free or māyā-involved brahman ranks before any subjectivity. He feels that if Indian thought had consequently gone beyond this point, it should have denied the plurality of these viewpoints and declared solipsism instead (compare Mainländer's solipsistic interpretation of Buddhism, pp. 94, 99). For von Hartmann the abstract monism of Brahmanism in which the empirical world is illusion amounts to acosmism.(25)

Marking the beginning of a reform movement, as von Hartmann sees it, the Buddha enters the Brahmanical scene: emphasizing the negative side of acosmism, he draws the necessary consequences, leading India historically to the next stage, but philosophically further away from truth.(26) Von Hartmann, anticipating a significant aspect of Spengler's idea of a "Socialist nirvāna" (p. 131), conjectures that Buddhism emphasizes the general misery of existence (birth, old age, disease, death; p. 225) in order to stimulate the need for salvation in all men. "For the first time the doctrine of the eudemonological worthlessness of life representing a general principle of truth, i.e. pessimism, appears as the cornerstone of religion." Brahmanism had not gone beyond a practical attitude of sadness about the vainness of a divided being. Buddhism removed this contradiction, deciding that the

---

(24) Von Hartmann, Rel.Bew., pp. 281-284.

(25) Von Hartmann, Rel.Bew., pp. 286-287.

(26) Von Hartmann, Rel.Bew., pp. 319-327.

brahman and māyā could not possibly exist together. Furthermore, once the illusion of a concrete existence was overcome, only nothingness would remain. Consequently, for von Hartmann, salvation comes from the negation of the misery of existence, although not in a Schopenhauerian manner, but simply as a reflection of the contrast between extinction (nirvāna) and suffering. We learn that in Buddhism the true background of existence (or, relatively speaking, the negative absolute) is nothingness; the positive ground of unreal existence is illusion, or māyā (i.e. the positive absolute), but only from the point of view of the yet unredeemed individual. According to von Hartmann, in Buddhism nothingness and illusion represent the objective and the subjective aspects of the same thing: illusion is nothingness as it appears to us, or, more precisely, as it wants to manifest itself. "In its psychological root, illusion in Buddhism (unlike in our thinking) is not considered as something positive, but merely as avidyā, ignorance, or negation of knowledge." While, supposedly, Brahmanism sees the fundamental problem in man's having, or wanting to have, a special ego, Buddhism sees it in man's desire to participate in existence in contradiction with the exclusive truth of nothingness. This is why von Hartmann considers pessimism as the philosophical basis of Buddhism, whereas in his opinion, Brahmanism, as evidenced by its practical use of Yoga, pursues the positive aim of a reunion with the brahman. In Buddhism, as he sees it, the intention of destroying existence and its inherent suffering becomes irrelevant as soon as suffering, taken as a psychological force or condition, is no longer conceived of as an efficient reality but, instead, as non-existent (nirvāna). In anticipation of Spengler's view of a "Stoic" tendency in Buddhism (p. 131) von Hartmann describes this "absolute indifferentism" as the highest and last practical consequence of Indian illusionism.(27)

(27) De Lubac mentions that, as early as in 1874, von Hartmann's pessimistic view of Buddhism was criticized as "a deplorable philosophical parody" (by Renouvier, Crit., p. 292); he also thinks that most lovers of Buddhism in Europe have more or less been followers of Schopenhauer (see rencontre, pp. 282(145), 280).

(4) Pessimism induced from Indian thought

Von Hartmann criticizes Brahmanism and Buddhism for "reducing the objective phenomenality of empirical reality to illusion", i.e. for depriving mankind of reality. His own approach, aspiring to what he believes to be the superior level of concrete monism, presupposes the historical reality of the world process. Epistemologically, von Hartmann's transcendental realism subordinates the real existence of things to the forms of our cognition. Following Schopenhauer, he derives the existence of this world from an irrational will which, in his case, works from within the unconscious. Sustaining (in Kant's name) an evolutionistic optimism on the basis of his eudemonological pessimism,(28) von Hartmann rejects what he considers as Schopenhauer's practical attitude of pessimism, disregarding completely such characterological and culturological connections as we have shown.(29) Nevertheless, his own argument, based on the assumption of an increasing socio-cultural discontent and carefully arranged in a "scientific inductive" manner, essentially represents another personal reformative reaction to culture, i.e. to his own cultural condition, and not simply a metaphysical necessity. What von Hartmann considers his psychological approach to pessimism appears to us as an axiological aspect of his own culture reaction: he literally wants to weigh unhappiness against happiness. In accordance with his historical perspective, suffering, inextricably connected with each individual self, functions as an ethical prerequisite for human progress in general (cultural refinement augments suffering). For von Hartmann any mystical content is made conscious by a psychological process, which also implies suffering. Based on the eminent teleological

---

(28) Ziegler (Hartm., p. 192(17)) comments that the presence of "evolutionistic optimism" deprives pessimism not only of its venom and danger, but of its character, too.

(29) Drews (Lebenswerk, p. 41) states plainly that "for von Hartmann pessimism was a purely theoretical, dispassionate understanding of the preponderance of suffering in life". He also accepts (System, p. 351) that von Hartmann has cleaned pessimism of such "unscientific and detrimental admixtures as are found, for instance, in Schopenhauer".

role of suffering in this process, he inductively establishes his eudemonological pessimism.

In order to support his inductive approach, which also needs outer views, he turns to India. Unaware of the culture factor, he presents a historical projection of Indian philosophy including suffering, which makes the different traditions appear as naturally leading up to the level of his own outlook. In his opinion, the appearance of Buddhism in India marks the transition from a Brahmanical pessimistic attitude to a proper eudemonological principle of pessimism, which, in his eyes, forms the veritable basis of Buddhism. Obviously, he does not take into account that Buddhism may be considered as metaphysically negative, but not culturally, which should preclude the derivation of any form of pessimism from it.(30) He assumes that both Brahmanism and Buddhism work through systematic psychological indifference. But while the Yoga of Brahmanism supposedly centres on the reversion of this inner or correlated force of the will which appears as the māyic drive, or motive for this drive, towards individuation, Buddhism is said to aim directly at the destruction of suffering by psychologically shifting the illusory and subjective desire for participation in existence towards the objective knowledge of nothingness, which von Hartmann considers as nirvāna. He disregards that Buddhism, despite its seemingly pessimistic attitude is not interested in the problem of suffering as such, but in its causal connections (compare p. 226, the pratītyasamutpāda). India, he believes, recognizes the will, but still denies it the reality which is fundamental to his own metaphysical pessimism. From a meta-philosophical point of view we observe that, in analogy with his personal belief in an asymptotical teleological principle of psychological change, he interprets the Indian comments on the process of consciousness change as psychological reactions to certain incomplete or immature metaphysical conceptions. He does not realize that, despite his sophisticated psychological induction, his scientific attitude essentially represents a negative culture reaction which, meta-philosophically, is opposed to the Indian neutral "psychological" approach.

---

(30) Neither von Hartmann nor Schopenhauer presents, as Radhakrishnan wrongly assumes, "a revised version of Buddhism" (cf. Phil.I, p. 342).

(B) Philipp Mainländer: India stabilizes

(1) The world as will to die

Equally inspired by Schopenhauer, and born only one year before von Hartmann, was Philipp Mainländer (Philipp Batz, 1841 - 1876). He not only developed but practically tried to live up to an uncompromising metaphysical pessimism of total dissolution and annihilation. His "philosophy of salvation" (Die Philosophie der Erlösung), presented by him as a continuation of Kant's and Schopenhauer's thought, culminates in his philosophical confirmation of what he considers "esoteric Buddhism" and "pure Christianity", "the two most advanced systems so far".(1) Mainländer's Weltanschauung, which consciously includes a selection of Christian and Indian ideas, highlighted by his own very individual interpretation of Buddhism, evolves around his "improvement" of Schopenhauer's idea of a "will to live", i.e. its transformation into his own idea of a "will to die".(2)

He begins his presentation with the assumption that in all great cultures the philosophical development of the human mind tends to proceed

---

(1) Mainländer's main work, vol. I of Die Philosophie der Erlösung, written in 1873, appeared in 1876, i.e. seven years after von Hartmann's German publication of The Philosophy of the Unconscious (see Rubinstein, Trias, p. 51). Vol. I, p. 366, he declares that "Kant's separation of space and time from the world has been the greatest deed in the field of critical philosophy and will never be exceeded by any other". P. 487, accepting, but also trying to improve Schopenhauer's idea of will, he adds that "space is a point, and time an a posteriori connection of reason".

(2) His philosophy thrives on the impulse received from Schopenhauer. Gebhard (Mainl., p. 220) comments: "The problem of the negation of the will to live, the striving from being towards non-being, can turn into an independent living force and reach the dimension of a Weltanschauung which sees death as the aim and purpose of each existence; this way went Philipp Mainländer."

in three great steps, which are: (a) polytheism, (b) monotheism-pantheism and (c) atheism. He offers his own thought as the definitive contribution to the third and final stage. While, as he believes, most of his occidental contemporaries - behaving "like the refined Indians of the age of Vedānta philosophy" - take their orientation from philosophical pantheism (which, according to his view, centres around such supposedly equivalent concepts as will, idea, absolute or matter), he feels ready to announce his own breakthrough. Finding that the philosophical expression of the innermost essence of both the Christian and the Buddhist doctrines amounts to genuine atheism, he denies that a personal God exists parallel with this world, whereas he accepts an all-pervading impulse of a God who died prior to the existence of this world.(3)

Mainländer holds that genuine philosophy must be completely immanent, i.e., not transgressing the content and boundaries of this world. Furthermore, it must be idealistic; i.e., bearing the cognizing subject in mind, the philosopher cannot expect things to be exactly as they are perceived through the senses. Yet the senses and self-awareness are the only two sources of experience and knowledge which he accepts.(4) Claiming the completion of what he considers fundamental but onesided views, notably Kant's and Schopenhauer's, he tries to assume "the highest immanent viewpoint" in his metaphysics. Mainländer calls himself an immanent philosopher, as compared to Schopenhauer to whom he refers as a transcendent philosopher.(5) Developing his own transcendental realism, he speculates that the world originated from a God, but adds that no human mind can ever truly grasp this origin.(6) All knowledge must rely on partial analogies with what can be studied in this world.(7) From

---

(3) Mainländer, Phil.I, pp. v-viii.

(4) Mainländer, Phil.I, p. 3-4.

(5) Mainländer, Phil.I, p. 603.

(6) Mainländer, Phil.I, p. 449.

(7) We notice a common characterological level of interest in Mainländer and Schopenhauer. In the words of Rauschenberger (Mainl., p. 235), "the

his observations he draws the following metaphysical conclusions:

(a) God wanted non-being;

(b) his own nature prevented immediate non-being;

(c) his nature required a split-up into a world of plurality in which all participants strive for non-being individually;

(d) in this strife they impede one another, they fight against one another, and thus they weaken their energy;

(e) God's entire essence was transformed into the world as a sum of energy;

(f) the entire world, the universe, has one aim, non-being, which it reaches through continual weakening of its total energy;

(g) each individual reaches, through the weakening of his energy, a point in his development where his striving for annihilation can be fulfilled.[8]

For Mainländer the inorganic cosmos contains nothing but individual, blind will,[9] which follows the impulse obtained from the decomposition[10] of the oneness into plurality. Teleologically

---

contemplation of the world was the nourishing ground of their philosophy, not its conceptual abstractions, in which German philosophy had moved for a long time".

(8) Mainländer, Phil.I, pp. 319-326.

(9) As Susanna Rubinstein (Trias, p. 53) points out, Mainländer's will derives from a pre-existing unit, unlike Schopenhauer's will which is aseitic (i.e. it exists "a se"), and monistic instead of individualistic.

(10) Mainländer (Phil.II, p. 489), insisting on his view of a straight and irreversible decomposition of the world, "finds no excuse" for Schopenhauer seeing the circle as the true symbol for nature. As Susanna Rubinstein (Trias, pp. 60-61) puts it quite clearly, Mainländer wants to use his observation of the physical world to prove his fundamental proposition: his "law of the weakening of universal energy", which, applying it to mankind, he also calls the "law of suffering", its extreme consequence being absolute annihilation. Rauschenberger (Mainl., pp. 232 and 236) refers to Mainländer's "dissolution of the deity" as "the most consequent testimony of pessimism in the entire history of philosophy".

Mainländer interprets this Schopenhauerian will to live as, actually, pure will to die: for him life itself is merely a manifestation of the will to die. Mankind marks only a transitory stage in the world process in which God changes from a form of over-existence, into existence (or becoming) and then into non-existence. When, after the annihilation of the transcendent realm, the immanent part of the world disappears we have completed our task and have attained the nihil negativum (compare Schopenhauer, p. 58). In Mainländer's eyes only an undeniable optimist, i.e. "one whose will is not yet mature for death", could reject this view. However, as he adds astutely, all supposed antagonism between the optimist and the pessimist results merely from some misunderstanding, since essentially and ultimately both want, must want, the same thing, which is death and annihilation.(11) This absolute annihilation to which he aspires, he believes to have rediscovered in the Buddhist concept of nirvāna. Prophesizing that four personalities would stand out until humanity vanished, he names the Buddha before Kant, Christ and Schopenhauer, thus clearly indicating how impressed he was by what he had gleaned from the Buddhist doctrine.(12)

---

(11) See Mainländer (Phil.I, pp. 348-349), where he also teaches that the true and consequent pessimist turns away from life and "rightly regards the begetting of children as a crime". At an earlier occasion (Phil.I, p. 83) he declares that the idea on which a single existence depends becomes destroyed if the individual does not "rejuvenate by begetting offspring". Thirty years later a parallel to Mainländer's virginity ideal is created by Otto Weininger (1880 - 1903, suicide) who in his main work (G.u.Char., p. 298) blames the child-bearing "mother type" for pulling humanity permanently back into the painful repetitions of life; only the child-denying "courtisane type", through and together with the man, has the potential to overcome these.

(12) Mainländer, Phil.I, pp. 329-349, 618-620.

(2) The Buddha as a solipsistic proto-pessimist

Setting a noteworthy international standard for philosophy, Mainländer announces that, beyond any doubt, certain Buddhist texts are "on the same level as the New Testament, the Critique of Pure Reason and the World as Will and Imagination and are unequaled by any other work of the human mind".(13) Confident in his own competence as an interpreter of Buddhism, he complains that in Europe Buddhist ideas are indiscriminately claimed and inappropriately used by materialists, realists, idealists and even pantheists. However, Buddhism and pantheism are to be seen as polar opposites. "The magic blue flower must not be touched, must only be admired", he declares, using the romanticists' symbol of their yearning for the infinite.

In his analysis of Buddhism Mainländer finds that the Buddha's teaching shares many ideal features with the pantheism of the ancient Brahmans. Both are pessimistic, i.e. "permeated by the truth that life is an evil". For both the outer world is unreal, a mere illusion. Both aspire to salvation. And yet, as he explains, there exists no greater difference than that between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In his opinion, Brahmanism considers the outer world and individual personality as imagination, as nothing, and the incomprehensible world soul, the brahman, as the only real thing. Buddhism, however, considering merely the outer world as phenomenal, accepts only the Buddha as real. Mainländer ignores that Buddhism does not divide the world into an inner, non-phenomenological, and an outer, phenomenological, sphere. Phenomenality, in Buddhism, refers to the world as a whole. (The very term "phenomenal" excludes such binary and dicotomizing terminology as used by Mainländer.) He confidently claims that he can support his view on the basis of Buddhist texts (while trying to see through the phantastic distortions of the Buddha's less enlightened followers). He then

---

(13) He indicates as his main references Spence Hardy, Manual of Buddhism (1860) and Eastern Monachism (1860); cf. our p. 42(5). For his own view of "esoteric Buddhism" see Phil.II, pp. 73-94; also compare Schopenhauer, our p. 59(43).

proceeds to expose "the esoteric and essential part" of Buddhism as follows.

The Buddha based his view on the entirety of his personality, the cognizing and the wanting ego. Mainländer calls him a "pure idealist", claiming that he had been pushed into this by Sāmkhya philosophy through which, for the first time, Brahmanism encountered some opposition. "Namely, the philosopher Sankhya (sic), the Buddha's predecessor, was just as extravagant as the ancient Brahmans." Sāmkhya in over-emphasizing the principle of real single individuality forgot the all-connecting principle, thus remaining just as far away from truth as the idea of a simple one-ness in and above the world does. The Buddha's viewpoint, which according to Mainländer is that of the individual, also supposedly is the only correct one in philosophy. It implies that the genuine starting point must be sought in our own personality. Everything that results from sense perception stems either from outside or from inside ourselves. He calls this condition the important problem of critical idealism and the great obstacle in thinking. Reminding us that Kant has explained the outer world as an ideal affinity of things with reason, Mainländer agrees that the world is phenomenal and its appearances depend on a subjective nexus.

On the basis of these preceding references Mainländer explains what he considers the "esoteric" part of Buddhism. First we must imagine that the individual personality of each one of us is the only real thing in the world, provisionally assuming that we are the Buddha ourselves. "In no other way can the miraculous blue flower of India be created or understood." The only real thing the Buddha could find in himself was upādāna (more precisely, the upādānas; pp. 227, 229) which for Mainländer means cleaving to existence and existing objects, or the will to live. He refers to the upādānas as will in a conventional (less than formal) manner, which, on this level, may be regarded as hermeneutically acceptable. This form of general will receives its specific character through karma, which he interprets as action or supreme power. He concludes that at first sight Buddhism seems based on two principles, but actually is based only on one, since karma and the upādānas are the

same. One inevitably exists with the other. Karma is the essence, the upādānas are the form, the general.[14] With the individual will to live (as determined by the principles of karma and the upādānas) is also inextricably connected the principle of reincarnation. He explains this further by quoting Spence Hardy: "Through upādāna a new existence is caused, but the way and manner in which this new creature acts depends on his karma, his character." "Karma itself only depends on itself, on its specific, individual character." Then he points out how, in his opinion, the Buddha himself determines the primeval essence of his nature: "Karma is achinteyya (sic), i.e. without consciousness. Neither karma nor upādāna has self-awareness" (acintaya: to think not, to reflect not).[15]

At this elementary stage of his view of Buddhism Mainländer also introduces the fundamental principle of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the unconscious will to live. He is convinced that it was, more than anything else, Buddhist writings which must have influenced Schopenhauer's thought: "India's age-old wisdom found, after almost three and a half thousand years (sic), the descendant of an emigrated son of the wonderland." Tracing for us the development of the Buddha's thought, Mainländer says that the next thing the Buddha found was that which mirrored karma and the upādānas: the mind or self-awareness. He emphasizes that this mirror is not part of the essence of the will, but that it is only phenomenal, i.e. essenceless illusion. From this follows the phenomenal nature of the body and the outer world, according to the Buddha, the illusion of an illusion. Mainländer then points out an

---

(14) As von Glasenapp (Indb., p. 92) notes, Schopenhauer, in a letter written in 1856 and referring to Hardy's works on Buddhism, had also equated upādāna and karma. S. Rubinstein, missing the images which should shape the will à la Schopenhauer, instead observes a contrast (Trias, p. 53): "According to Schopenhauer the idea is a transcendental type which perpetuates itself in the phenomena....According to Mainländer the idea is the epitomy of all features of an individual."

(15) Hardy, Manual (1860), pp. 394-396.

important difference between Kant and the Buddha. The body is, according to Kant, appearance, for which Kant finds a cause. For the "magnificent Indian", however, the body is illusion, is essenceless, is nothing. This is sufficient for Mainländer to call the Buddhist doctrine despotic or summary critical idealism. "Here the Buddha and Kant join hands like brothers." The Buddha declares, by virtue of his own personality (the only reality) and without any reasons, that body, mind and world are nothing. Kant, on the other hand, analyses the human mind and proves that not only the outer world but also we ourselves are appearance. We are the mirroring of our self by our consciousness. Kant had no knowledge of the Buddha's teaching, but both he and the Buddha had this idealism "in their Indo-European blood", as we are told.(16) Mainländer apparently looks at the Buddha primarily as a thinker concerned with reality, linking up, and even equating to some extent, the Kantean view with "esoteric Buddhism" (the expression was in fact, with some reservation, used by Schopenhauer(17)). From a Buddhist viewpoint esoteric, i.e. yogic, methods might allow one to see things as they really are; however, we are not dealing with transcendental categories (also see Buddhism, p. 242).

On the basis of this comparative description, Mainländer announces that the thing which is real is no longer the Buddha's own personality, whence he had started, but the unconscious karma, the mindless individual will to live. The Buddha thus declared that karma is individual,(18) but, since he did not furnish any reasons, Mainländer himself wants to show how this statement can be derived from the principles of Buddhism itself. Before letting him proceed, we must mention that Mainländer's assumption of karma as being strictly individual is not Buddhistic. Although, in Buddhism, everything may be regarded as individual, e.g., in the sense of what distinguishes two persons, it never appears in the sense of a metaphysical category. It would be more appropriate to assume that where the Buddha is, karma does not work (and,

---

(16) Mainländer, Phil.II, p. 79. Cf. Kant's own opinion, our p. 44(15).

(17) Schopenhauer, W.W.II, p. 589.

(18) Hardy, Manual (1860), p. 446.

therefore, not affect him). The Buddhist may, from an individual point of view, consider his body as individual, but not necessarily karma or "his" karma.

As Mainländer sees it, the Buddha found within himself the strong but not almighty drive for existence, the will to live. He also found a hidden, unconscious power emerging in the form of thoughts and feelings. This power became the basis of his thought, since it was here that he discovered the principle of omnipotence. "Karma is supreme power", as Mainländer quotes.(19) From this almighty, unconscious, individual karma he wants to derive all the other principles mentioned so far: our conscious free will is an illusion, because it implies a restriction which would be contrary to omnipotence; the entire human mind, including its sensitiveness, is an illusion, because it cannot reflect the real karma; if we consider the mind as an illusion, we must necessarily accept that also our body and the outer world are an illusion since their existence depends upon the reflection by this illusory mirror. Mainländer now explains why, apart from the fact that no second thing can exist besides the one which is almighty, karma must be individual. Just as the concept of infinity depends on the ideas of space and time which due to their ideal nature cannot be more real than the mind, which itself is an illusion, so there can only remain some individual thing which is not infinite. We should conceive of the latter in terms of pure and unimaginable individuality. From here he proceeds to his main question concerning the innermost essence of this omnipotent, unconscious karma. His answer rests on four negative predicates: unconscious (because we cannot be aware of our unconsciousness), omnipotent (because it negates the natural limitation of the world as we can experience it), spaceless, and timeless (both ensuing from the above-mentioned idealism seen in the Buddhist doctrine). All these negations indicate to him that karma transcends the human mind. He quotes: "The wonder-working karma is a mere abstraction....One of the four things which only a Buddha can comprehend is: karmaviśya, i.e. in which manner karma causes effect" (veśaya: to cause to enter into).

(19) Mainländer, Phil.II, p. 81.

He therefore describes Buddhism as transcendent dogmatism. He also refers to it as "thing-as-such idealism" because, on the basis of inner experience, only the ego possesses reality.(20)

The only thing which is positive in Mainländer's view of "esoteric Buddhism" is the proposition that karma is individual and that it exists. He adds that the Buddha did not tell us how this could be explained, because he could not. We should like to point out that karma in Buddhism has no theoretical meaning. It is Mainländer who changes it into a theoretical category. In his opinion, the Buddha did not derive the individual cause of life from some transcendent primeval cause which was lost in time, but from some transcendent primeval cause which was always present and eternal. However, by putting the transcendent, inexplorable cause of the world before the world (in such a manner that first the cause exists on its own but is then replaced by the world itself) Mainländer contrives a clearly ordered world whose appearances he considers in no way enigmatic, apart from that one miracle which is the origin of the world itself. On the basis of this hypothetical assumption or belief, using karma as the essential factor to secure steadiness in time, he establishes a form of historical order in his outlook. (Mainländer's need for linear development reflects the strongly historical nature of the German conception of culture. In India time is never a form of unity but, rather, discontinuity is some co-effect of time. Compare p. 146(3).) The only problem remaining enigmatic for him is that of how there can have existed such a oneness before the world. As we learn, the Buddha, by assuming that only he himself was real, made it feasible that the primeval cause existed with him simultaneously. In all other cases where such a reality is supposed to comprise more than one individual, Mainländer thinks it confusing and paradoxical that the

---

(20) The two kinds of idealism which Mainländer distinguishes are: (a) Critical idealism = transcendental idealism: Kant is the "messiah of critical idealism"; (b) absolute idealism = "thing-as-such idealism": only in the teaching of the Buddha (also theoretical egoism = solipsism). See Mainländer, Phil.II, pp. 39, 51, 55.

transcendent primeval cause, which is oneness (he also calls it God), should be present simultaneously. Referring back to the Oupnek'hat - thus, honouring exactly the same source as Schopenhauer had used more than half a century before him - he ventures to demonstrate how the correct conclusions should be drawn, especially with respect to von Hartmann's supposedly erroneous interpretation shown below. Mainländer writes: "Inasmuch as, according to patheism, we are expected to think that God, the simple oneness, could, for example, exist whole and undivided in Jack and at the same time whole and undivided in Jill, we feel clearly in our mind that something is being covered up, because such a connection, although easily phrased, cannot be imagined or thought."(21) He thinks that the Buddha should have felt that he, but only he himself as one single individual, was God. The Buddha carried within himself God and the world, and other than himself there was nothing. Quoting from the Oupnek'hat, "hae omnes creaturae in totum ego sum et praeter me aliud ens non est" (see p. 54), Mainländer finds the ancient Upanisadic truth at least as suitable for Buddhism as for pantheism (Brahmanism). He thinks that this problem of identification, when misunderstood, accounts for the confusion between Buddhism and pantheism. As an example of what he considers "a most superficial investigation into the great system" he quotes von Hartmann: "The only entity which corresponds to the idea of the inner cause of my action is something non-individual, the all-one Unconscious, which therefore corresponds as equally well to Peter's idea of his ego as to Paul's idea of his ego. On this deepest of all grounds is based only the esoteric Buddhist ethic, not the Christian one."(22)

(21) Mainländer, Phil.II, p. 84; also cf. Schopenhauer, P.P.II, § 69, against pantheism.

(22) Von Hartmann, Ph.d.U., p. 648 (= p. 718 in Mainländer's reference which corresponds with the 1871/72 editions). In Phänom., p. 689, he calmly reasserts his own view of a historical development of mankind: "This, however, presupposes total renunciation of the demand for individual salvation and the replacement of egoistic pseudomoral by the moral principle of cultural development, which means giving up that which makes the specific difference between Mainländer's standpoint and mine."

Again, Mainländer wants to give us the impression that only he can properly handle "the miraculous blue flower". In his view pantheism is full of contradictions but Buddhism is not. The only miracle he asks us to accept is the eternal transcendent cause from which everything else follows clearly and logically. This miracle he also describes as the unconscious, timeless, spaceless and individual karma. He explains that it first creates for itself body and mind (including senses, intellect, power of judgement, phantasy, and reason). There is no contradiction, since karma is omnipotent. Next, feeling and imagination are developed. According to esoteric Buddhism the entire world is also phenomenal. The limitation of the Buddha's personal will is also phenomenal. The only real thing is the omnipotent karma within him.

Mainländer now comes to what he considers the crucial question of esoteric Buddhism, which is the question of why the Buddha could be the almighty God when he was in fact restricted in his actions. He accepts that this situation must have resulted in a real conflict within the Buddha. The obvious answer which he gives us is that karma, the "will", wanted this conflict. It used its omnipotence to create itself some semi-independent body together with all the constituents of a powerful world of illusion. But why did it want this real conflict? Arriving at the centre-piece of his interpretation of Buddhism, Mainländer reveals the role of karma through what remains for him the only possible answer: "Through this incarnation in a world of illusion it wanted annihilation, the change from being to non-being." He elaborates, "the conflict is the individual fate which karma directs with inscrutable wisdom and omnipotence. Predominantly karma connects suffering with existence and through knowledge shows how the Buddha can liberate himself from existence." Karma works only for its own aim. It develops the motives in the outer world and the desires within us, because it needs the resulting conflict situations in order to attain non-existence. Mainländer adds that the almighty karma could not, as one would perhaps have expected, liberate itself from existence immediately, simply because its omnipotence is no omnipotence when it

faces itself. Therefore, the attainment of non-existence can only result from a gradual process of conflict.[23]

Mainländer stresses that the essential difference between pantheism and Buddhism rests on the fundamental Buddhist assumption that karma never incarnates in more than in one individual. Karma, he explains, never stays in just one body until it has reached its aim, but it changes its form continuously. On the basis of what he has termed thing-as-such idealism he intends to give such a clear demonstration of the irrelevance of reincarnation that his reader is taken to the boundaries of reason. He openly confesses: "I feel clearly that only a narrow strip separates me from the realm of madness." Only his own existence, including his own past back to his childhood is real for him and, of course, his own omnipotent karma which, through him, ultimately works for its own end. He assures us that nobody has ever stood or will ever stand more firmly on the ground of the absolute ego than he himself, but that he has left that ground after thorough contemplation, finding that the solipsistic view of the omnipotent will could have had its unrestricted validity only before the world came into existence. He expects us to admit that the assumption of an absolutely phenomenal world could make as much sense as that of a real world. He disposes of the seeming contradiction in this view by reminding us that the absolute truth lies in the fact that God is in a state of change from being into non-being. Since we never know where we ourselves fit in between the first and the last incarnation of God, Mainländer qualifies the entire question of reincarnation as marginal. But he points out that what he calls God, or in Buddhist language karma, could never, as long as it remained pure and omnipotent karma, reach non-being. Incarnation remains a conditio sine qua non for non-being. It appears as irrelevant for him whether God (the omnipotent karma) should be looked at as existing in the divided world or as being in just one single

---

(23) Olga Plumacher (Indiv., p. 22) notices a double movement in this process: a development of form which is accompanied by the exhaustion of will (promoted by each individual death).

person.[24] Each person must decide privately if it is he through whom God changes into non-existence. As long as the incarnated God is not freed, the world must continue; as soon as it is ready for non-being it will cease to exist.

Mainländer is convinced that his interpretation of esoteric Buddhism does complete justice to it. He extols it as "the only doctrine which dissolves all absurdities of life, its gruesome, dreadful character and everything agonizing and enigmatic in our scientific outlook". The repulsiveness of the horrible things with which we must put up in life loses its absurd power once we come to realize that the almighty karma uses this unreal illusion in order to develop the necessary disgust in us. The gruesome struggle for existence in such a cold, bloody, painful world, and the miraculous phenomenon of our entire empirical world, is only a means for the karma to liberate itself.

Criticizing Kant's "grandiose critical idealism" Mainländer offers to make it "consequent and invulnerable" by connecting it with his interpretation of the Buddha's "thing-as-such (or absolute) idealism". He suggests that our sense impressions are caused by the unconscious will, and that the assumption of a multiplicity of "things as such" is irrelevant. With this little (fairly Schopenhauerian) improvement of his, Kant's view should surmount even that of the Buddha, since Kant had demonstrated philosophically how the world arises in accordance with our mental impressions, while the Buddha had only decreed that it is illusion. Mainländer explains that only now, with his corrections, would Kant's ingenious distinction between intelligible and empirical character deserve Schopenhauer's extraordinary praise, because now we could see that behind just one empirical character there lies only one single intelligible character. He assures us that as soon as we refer back to one single individual will, the Buddha's karma,

---

(24) Olga Plumacher (Indiv., p. 25), in criticizing Mainländer's individualism, points out that Schopenhauer could assume a timeless identity of individuals "not because he was a monist, but because he was a subjective idealist", and because for him "everything physical is something metaphysical (for which Mainländer, the immanent philosopher, reproaches him)".

even the most daring and premature of Schopenhauer's statements become justifiable, for instance his "obscure" remark: "One can also say: the will to live manifests itself in countless phenomena which altogether result in nothing. This nothingness with all its manifestations remains, however, within the will to live and lies at its bottom".(25)

The different ways which may lead to salvation strike Mainländer as a secondary problem, his principal interest being directed towards salvation itself.(26) His own feeling of Lebensmüdigkeit (weariness of life; compare the cultural taedium vitae in Spengler, p. 122) is pathetically expressed in his words: "All by myself am I in this world, and I am tired, very tired. I and the world, we want to die."

(3) Pessimism deduced from Indian thought

Mainländer's manner of deducing pessimism from Indian thought reveals - analogous to Nietzsche's Zarathustra - his alienation from Christianity (i.e., the Christian element in his culture) inasmuch as it reveals how urgently he needed a different standpoint, namely, one which, at least metaphysically, allowed him to operate independent of any European metaphorical attachment. India (as the orient in general), in fulfilling a metaphorical function, also provides the required "alienness" (see philosophical alienation, p. 70).

---

(25) Mainländer, Phil.II, p. 94; Schopenhauer, P.P.II (§ 147a), p. 314.

(26) S. Rubinstein (Trias, pp. 68-77) judges that Mainländer, in his own eudemonistic pessimism, did not achieve as well-ordered a teleology as von Hartmann: his conception of an existentia of a (dead) God and essentia of a (proceeding) God indicates to her a certain awareness of that "palpable contradiction" underlying it. Rauschenberger (Mainl., pp. 237-243) lists that Mainländer, developing Schopenhauer's critical idealism into critical realism (with the exception of matter) and transcendental realism, replaces Schopenhauer's inner-worldly process of (relative) negation by his own (absolute) annihilation through the time process.

The intricate philosophy of Mainländer combines his interpretations of his principal German forerunners with a cleverly adapted view of what he takes for the essence of Buddhism. In a manner reminding us of his master Schopenhauer, Mainländer assures us of the supremacy of his radical individualism. We easily follow his overt corrections of those German views incorporated by him. But his relation with Buddhism strikes us not only as far more complex but also as quite wilful in several respects (e.g., his equation of the Kantean view with esoteric, i.e. yogic, Buddhism). The manner in which he incorporates Buddhist elements in his own view reflects his naturally limited standard of information, which he himself, however, seems to have considered exhaustive. Buddhologically, he did not have enough material to appreciate the problem of "will" in Buddhism; certainly, neither karma nor upādāna is will (see p. 243).(27) Hermeneutically, his interpretation of Buddhism may well have originated in the following circular manner. On the basis of certain prejudices (obtained through Kant, Schopenhauer, and perhaps von Hartmann) Mainländer may have looked only for certain messages in Buddhist literature. The meaning which then arose between the messages he found and the thought he had brought along seems to have resulted in the complete adaptation of his view of Buddhism to his own eudemonistic pessimism, including some partial equation of the two views. Through his metaphysical pessimistic heritage he implicitly participates in Schopenhauer's cultural reaction, while skipping his characterological approach. The structure of his won metaphysical outlook touches, teleologically, upon a historical and, eudemonistically, an anthropological (ethical, existential) level of pessimism, but he indicates no cultural awareness within his own reaction. Instead, he treats pessimism as a universal metaphysical concept and a genuine link with Buddhism.

In his pessimistic reaction to the world, Mainländer proceeds in principle from suffering to understanding and further to the wish for non-being. His principal philosophical belief is expressed in his

---

(27) Radhakrishnan (Phil.I, p. 371) also still equates Schopenhauer's "will" with the Buddha's karma.

statement that all philosophy rests on transcendent foundations. By putting his version of a transcendent primeval cause before the world (a step which he considers a decisive improvement on what he takes to be the genuine Buddhist outlook) he tries to explain the indispensable conflict (the suffering) experienced in an endless line of persons, or individual manifestations of the will to live. Although Mainländer's principle of individuation provides, as in Schopenhauer, the metaphysical connecting point for his own pessimistic culture reaction, it operates on a different level of reality. Discarding Kant's view of a multiplicity of "things-as-such", he tries to develop an "immanent philosophy" which, incorporating a change from subjective critical idealism to transcendental realism-idealism, allows him to discover that will in its individual form aims at self-annihilation. On the cultural level it is the ever present painful existential conflict through which Mainländer realizes that the will to live is essentially a will to die which, upon maturity (having used itself up), turns everything into non-being, which he identifies with nirvāna. (A culturological connection of nirvāna and the will's dynamic momentum towards form without content occurs in Spengler; see pp. 131-132.) He diverges from the actual Buddhist view which assumes that suffering (duhkha) is (a) one of the three fundamental "marks of the universe" and (b) objectively derivable from avidyā, the only basic form of reality (see Buddhism, p. 246). He ignores that it also is the establishment of the causal connection between avidyā and duhkha, not the suffering as such, which lies at the core of Buddhism. The Buddhist aim is to stop the flow of consequences stemming from avidyā. Suffering does not cause but simply coincides with final understanding. Likewise, it plays no causal role regarding nirvāna. Mainländer is a pessimist because he personally sees no way to escape from suffering other than through total rejection of the world. Through his metaphysical explorations of the will he forces himself to believe that suffering is even fundamentally necessary in order to terminate, in a historical sense, the existence of the world and with it that of mankind.[28]

---

[28] S. Rubinstein (Trias, pp. 52, 78), mentioning Mainländer's suicide on 31 March 1876, the day after his main work was published, emphasizes

(C) Paul Deussen: a pessimistic perfection of Indian philosophy

Paul Deussen (1845 - 1919) was enthusiastically introduced to Schopenhauer's thought by his former schoolmate Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900).(1) But, while Nietzsche in his search for the superman left the limitations of Schopenhauerian metaphysical pessimism behind, anticipating in a sense Spengler's and Gebser's predictions of the end of traditional philosophy, Deussen remained a life-long follower and proponent of Schopenhauer's teachings.(2)

We are introducing him as the last member of our small group of genuine philosophers. Technically speaking, Deussen is a representative philosopher, although his essential philosophical contribution consists, apart from various short writings, in only one small work, Die Elemente der Metaphysik (notwithstanding his voluminous Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, in which he tries to present the major philosophical traditions of the world as parts of a General History of the World; and irrespective of his great indological work). Our two cultural thinkers, whom we present after Deussen, treat metaphysical pessimism, as we shall see, largely as a problem of the past, Spengler by formal transformation

---

how uncompromisingly, as compared to Schopenhauer, his life and doctrine were connected. Gebhard (Mainl., pp. 225-226), rejecting the possibility of philosophical exemplification in this point, comments that "in his main work Mainländer never recommended suicide, but, like Schopenhauer, only offered his moral support in case of the actual incident"; ideally he wanted to pass on his knowledge of salvation to everybody. Rauschenberger (Mainl., p. 236) considers Mainländer as the only philosopher, so far, who connects pessimism with socialism (also compare Spengler, our p. 132).

(1) Deussen (Wie ich zu Schoph. kam, p. 14) begins to read and contemplate Schopenhauer in 1868; also cf. Nietzsche, p. 38.

(2) Mockrauer (Deussen, p. 78) remarks that this "consciously disciple-like serving relationship to Schopenhauer" has distracted people from his own philosophical significance.

but without achieving the necessary inner detachment, Gebser by foreseeing a fundamental change in man's approach to thought as such. In Deussen's outlook pessimism still represents a metaphysical summit.

(1) Deussen's allegiance to Schopenhauer

Deussen receives his principal metaphysical orientation through Schopenhauer, to whom, as he believes, the world owes the perfection of Kant's thought.(3) "There is nothing but will; its proper state is negation; an aberration of the will is affirmation, the manifestation and purificatory process of which is this entire world."(4) In these words there lies for him "the metaphysical truth which for all countries and times is one and the same". Unlike von Hartmann, Mainländer, or other critics, he has little to add or to alter which would amount to an essential change of Schopenhauer's view. Instead, Deussen's accurate and systematic personality finds it gratifying to comment on metaphysical side-aspects which he finds striking, liberally including Indian concepts into his philosophical elaborations and equations.

Unaware of the cultural characterological understructure of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, which we have exposed as the fundamental level of inspiration for his concept of will, Deussen tries to correct Schopenhauer's, and Kant's, metaphysical concept of the human character, which according to them presents both an empirical, unfree, and an intelligible, free, aspect.(5) Deussen considers it as inappropriate to regard this intelligible character, being non-empirical and free, as character at all. He argues that an individual having a certain character has certain qualities which, according to the law of causality, determine his actions, and consequently he is no longer free. Should the intelligible character, as Kant and Schopenhauer want it, be something free, then it cannot really be a type of character because as such it would contain qualities, which necessarily limit. Having raised the problem in this manner, Deussen re-defines the intelligible character as

(3) Deussen, Kant u.Schoph., p. 9.

(4) Deussen, Elemente d.Met., pp. 112-113.

(5) Deussen, Kant u.Schoph., pp. 11-14.

a God-like entity which, since it contains the totality of qualities, is de facto quality-less. Referring to it as a non-committed possibility of good and evil, free to follow one direction of qualities or another, he explicitly shifts the emphasis from this conception of God to that of a soul which is similarly free to choose its own direction.(6)

Obviously, Deussen is wary of any breach between the empirical and the intelligible character. Indicating this by his own modified Schopenhauerian approach apparently results for him in a tactical metaphysical advantage: he improves his basis of individual freedom. "This possibility consists in being able, at any moment in our life, to renounce this entire world-order based on egoism and ruled by causality."(7) The essence of this view, he feels, is best expressed by the ideas of the Christian self-denial and Schopenhauer's doctrine of the negation of the will to live. But this negation, as Deussen emphasizes, does not aim at a total annihilation of the world qua will; it is solely directed against that empirical world-order which is ruled by egoism. He pictures it as a slow and steady process. "As a rule, negation is not, as some (of Schopenhauer's) later remarks may seem to suggest, a suddenly consumed process but a gradual purification through the whole disciplining effect of life, until there happens what the Bhagavadgītā says: aneka janma samsiddhas tato vāti parām gatim (perfecting himself through many lives, he then attains to the highest goal; 6.45)."(8)

This does not amount to a change of the empirical character, as Deussen explains further, but to an emancipation of the will from the entire empirical character and its physical fixation "as the Indians have come to realize, teaching that one who is liberated during his lifetime (jīvan-mukta) does no longer consider the body as the self

---

(6) He enlarges further on the mystical aspect of the freedom of will in his Jakob Böhme, pp. 34-37.

(7) Deussen, Kant u.Schoph., p. 13.

(8) Deussen, A.G.Phil.II.2, p. 555; Kant u.Schoph., p. 14; tr. Radhakr.

and even no longer the sufferings of his body as his own".

Kant, as we are reminded, has approached the thing as such only by proceeding through space, time and causality; but Schopenhauer, bearing in mind that, besides appearance, we are also thing as such, recognized it as the will in ourselves (undoubtedly the ātman), his main improvement being the division of the psyche, or soul, into will and intellect.

(2) Schopenhauer and Śaṅkara as reformers of Indian thought

Having learnt in which regard Schopenhauer, with a little improvement by Deussen himself, has not only safegarded but actually perfected Kant's teaching, we also learn that he plays a supposedly similar role with respect to his Indian antecedents.(9) In order to convince us that Indian philosophy is centred on one fundamental idea which, prepared by Kant, reoccurs in Schopenhauer, Deussen takes two peculiar steps. He declares (a) that the original "idealism" of the Upaniṣads deteriorated in the course of a distorting tradition and therefore had to be reinstated by Śaṅkara, and (b) that its ultimate elucidation and development is found in Schopenhauer.(10) The "daring and rugged idealism" of the oldest Upaniṣadic texts, as spread, for instance, by the sage Yājñavalkya in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (compare p. 200), "passes step by step into pantheism, cosmogony, theism, and finally into the atheism of the Sāṅkhya system and the apsychism of the Buddhists, until in the end the great reformer Śaṅkara (born 788 A.D., exactly a thousand years before Schopenhauer his mental and spiritual kinsman, and 1215 years after Plato who advocated in Greek garb the same fundamental metaphysical views) restores that original idealism".(11) (These analogies and synchronisms, which Deussen centres somewhat

---

(9) Deussen, Ved.Pl.Kant, pp. 16-24.

(10) Quite generally, Max Müller (1823 - 1900) already accepts that the will, or subject of the phenomenal world, corresponds with the brahman in both Śaṅkara and the Upaniṣads (Vedānta, p. 69).

(11) Deussen, Ved.Pl.Kant, p. 17.

amorphously on his concept of pessimism, appear again with clearly structured, important roles in Spengler and in Gebser.)

The original idealism of Yājñavalkya is based, according to Deussen, on three propositions. (a) The sole reality in the world is the ātman, the self: i.e., the world, being phenomenon, according to Kant, or representative imagination, according to Schopenhauer, only exists in my conscious self (in the intellect which evolves from the will). (b) As one of two significant corollaries of this fundamental proposition the ātman is looked upon as the "seer of seeing, the hearer of hearing, the knower of knowing", which is the subject of knowledge within us. Faithfully Schopenhauerian in spirit, Deussen explains that "this knowing subject is still not the ultimate; it is borne by the subject of willing, which, as willing, extends to the whole world, but which as not-willing may appear in another divine world unknown to us but visible and comprehensible to us in the phenomenon of moral conduct. This thought of the Upanisads has been developed to its ultimate profundity only by the genius of Schopenhauer."(12) (c) The other corollary is the proposition that "the ātman as subject of knowledge is and remains eternally unknowable (and) is not attainable through knowledge, but only by becoming immediately absorbed in our own self". (Here Deussen refers to yoga as "the art of withdrawing into oneself... and of there becoming immediately aware of the ultimate mystery of all being".)

Next, the process of philosophical deterioration, as seen by Deussen, reaches some pantheistic stage (especially in the Chandōgya Upanisad; compare p. 198) at which the one ātman becomes identical with the empirical world. Perhaps as a reaction against the obscurity of this equation, as he feels, the ātman comes to be regarded from a more causal, cosmogonic perspective according to which he first creates the world and then enters into it. The subsequent distinct division into a world-creating ātman and an individual ātman marks a new level in the decline of the original thought "which has become the starting point for modern philosophy, namely theism". Once separated in this

---

(12) Deussen, Ved.Pl.Kant, p. 20.

manner, the world-creating ātman becomes obliterated by an ever growing realism, "so that there were left over only a real world (prakṛti) and the individual souls (puruṣa) entangled in it". This step takes Deussen to the Sāṃkhya System (as he finds it in both the Mahābhārata and the Kārikā) "which can be regarded only as the ultimate product of that gradually progressive degeneration, but not, as one imagined, as an original creation of the mind based on natural perception".(13) He considers the philosophical aspect of Yoga as a parallel to Sāṃkhya's allegedly dualistic response to the impulse of suffering (compare p. 280).

On this ultimate level of estrangement from the original Upaniṣadic doctrine, Deussen finds an opportunity to connect, without jeopardizing the coherency of his view, the Brahmanical line of development with the Buddhist tradition, namely, inasmuch as it "combines apsychism with the atheism of Sāṃkhya". Now a change of supposedly Schopenhauerian proportion happens. "Into this spiritual and mental confusion there appears the great religious and philosophical reformer Śaṅkara." The latter, by developing a method which allows him to look at his philosophical heritage from both a level of lower knowledge (aparā vidyā) and of higher knowledge (parā vidyā), restores, as Deussen believes, Yājñavalkya's original three tenets, the Upaniṣadic principles of the unknowableness of God, of his identity with the soul, and of the non-reality of the world-creation and metempsychosis. "Through Śaṅkara this doctrine found its cultivation, prevalent in India even at the present time, and in the Kantian Schopenhauerian philosophy it found that systematic foundation which it itself lacked."(14) This smooth decline of the Indian philosophical tradition and its effectual resurrections, one Indian, one German, shall be at the centre of our hermeneutic attention directed to the nature of Deussen's characterological, cultural and historical awareness which allows him to place his enormous indological work on a pessimistic metaphysical base. But first we must see how he connects pessimism and suffering.

---

(13) Deussen, Ved.Ph.Kant, p. 22.

(14) Deussen, Ved.Ph.Kant, p. 24.

(3) Pessimism evolves with the quest of deliverance from suffering

Deussen assumes a fundamental universal connection between pessimism and the doctrine of deliverance. "The three great religions of mankind, therefore, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christianity, and not less the philosophy of Schopenhauer, which represents Christianity in its purest form,...assume that this earthly existence is a condition...the conception of which has been briefly and well described as pessimism."(15) Indicating pessimism as "the latent underlying of the Upanisad teaching", Deussen includes it right from the beginning in the described process of philosophical deterioration (compare p. 198). "Monism is the natural standpoint of philosophy, and wherever dualism has appeared in its history it has always been the consequence of antecedent stress and difficulty, and as it were the symptom of the wane of the philosophizing spirit."(16) He then draws a parallel between the dualism of Descartes "which began with Plato and Aristotle" and the dualism of Sāmkhya. Mentioning that the original concern of the Upanisads was "the deliverance from avidyā by the knowledge of the ātman", and deliverance from suffering essentially a by-product, Deussen declares that "the climax of this pessimistic movement is reached in the Sāmkhya system", which strikes him as being predominantly concerned with averting suffering.(17) "Such a standpoint, where it makes its appearance in philosophy, is everywhere a symptom of exhaustion." Having lost the pure desire for knowledge and truth, "philosophy becomes a means to an end, a remedium for the suffering of existence". Such is the trend which Deussen observes in post-Aristotelian thought and analogously in Sāmkhya and Buddhism. (This German sensitivity to the phenomenon of decline, as we already see it here in Deussen, is to reach peak positions in the thought of both Spengler and Gebser.) The common mistake of deriving pessimism from suffering in Indian thought, especially from Buddhism, is also repeated by Deussen. "Buddhism was the first to transform that which was a mere consequence

(15) Deussen, Phil.Ups., p. 140 (i.e. A.G.Phil.II.3, p. 563).

(16) Deussen, Phil.Ups., p. 244 (i.e. A.G.Phil.II.3, p. 220).

(17) Deussen, Phil.Ups., pp. 254-255 (i.e. A.G.Phil.II.3, pp. 229-230).

into a motive, and by conceiving emancipation as an escape from the sufferings of existence, to make selfishness the ultimate mainspring of religion."[18] The actual role of the principle of suffering in Buddhist thought, briefly referred to at the end of our exposition of Mainländer, is treated in more detail in our chapter on Buddhism, while Deussen's hermeneutic, i.e. his cultural and historical awareness, here remains our immediate concern.

(4) Deussen collects pessimism

Our inevitable interest in Deussen as a philosopher may have temporarily obscured the fact that he actually reverses the familiar functional role of the Indian and German tributaries to metaphysical pessimism: his overall philosophical argument, although not without originality and significance, is short, whereas his indological work, which has to be seen entirely in the light of his Schopenhauerian outlook, is vast. Metaphysically he modifies and mellows Schopenhauer's pessimistic view of individual freedom (ignoring, however, his vivid characterological culture reaction), while emphasizing that negation is directed against empirical egoism, not agaist the essence of the world qua will. Deussen's explicitly monistic stance does not question the spectacular but inadmissible equation of will and ātman. Similarly, he follows the established perspective which treats pessimism as a universal response to suffering.

The "reformed Vedāntist" orientation which Deussen displays on the basis of a very smooth projection of European-Indian philosophical decline makes him as little as his forerunners a true philosophical historian. Deussen is a philosophical collector. Schopenhauer's original culture reaction essentially also satisfies Deussen's reformative spirit. Deussen retrospectively rewards him by fortifying his much wanted metaphysical outside position, declaring that "in India metaphysics can be traced almost to its origin".[19] Deussen, the

---

(18) Deussen, Phil.Ups., p. 341 (i.e. A.G.Phil.II.3, p. 307).

(19) Deussen, Elemente d.Met., p. 113.

indologist, goes there - as a Schopenhauerian.

Hermeneutically speaking, Deussen's world-unifying approach to the history of philosophy (preposterous from a Spenglerian point of view and simply "deficient" in a Gebserian sense) represents a form of rationally immoderate philosophical annexation in which Indian ideas are assimilated out of context. We find Indian philosophy presented, in principle, as a metaphysical extension of German thought. It also appears again as an isolated event and not as a complex flow of different traditions, which in Deussen's case seems especially remarkable.(20) His developmental projection serves a (predetermined) metaphysical need. One obvious reason why he did not overcome his inherited hermeneutic limitations seems to lie in the fact that he did not see his own tradition. In addition, the Schopenhauerians treat pessimism from an exclusively metaphysical angle, overlooking entirely the fundamental cultural reaction in it (which Schopenhauer presents most vividly of all). Meta-philosophically, Deussen did not appreciate India's entirely different cultural situation. The reverse problem, namely an attempt to firmly allot thought to culture, shall be discussed in our next chapter.

---

(20) Disregarding the independent historical backgrounds of the individual Indian traditions (accurately described in his work), he treats them all, right from the beginning (A.G.Phil.I.1, p. 1), as universally centred on "the thing as such".

Chapter Four

Spengler: the Indian parallel - fulfilment or pessimism?

Oswald Arnold Gottfried Spengler (1880 - 1936), in unfolding his bold and gigantic view of "culture" - culminating in his vision of the "decline of the West" (Der Untergang des Abendlandes) - first lets us know, quite modestly, that the truth as he sees it will forever reflect the limitations of his own personality.(1) Representing an aspect of cultural fate, this truth as Spengler pursues it shall lead us to some intricate forms of pessimism. As a good observer he expressed himself well. It is the pessimistic nature of his self-expression in connection with his cultural observations we are interested in, while we refrain from judging his historiographic correctness.

His principal objective is the creation of a "new perspective completely restricted to history, a philosophy of fate and, moreover,

---

(1) "A thinker is a person destined to produce a symbolical representation of time through his own seeing and understanding. He has no choice. He thinks as he must think, and he sees his ultimate truth in the picture of his world as it was born with him" (Spengler, U.d.A., p. vii).

the first one of its kind".[2] Although he seeks to base his philosophy on the hardness of life and the endurance necessary for it, rather than on some self-deceptive idealistic concept of life, he sees no need to deduce pessimism from this fact. As part of his approach he consciously cultivates a lucid, lively, almost sensual and somewhat pathetic style of writing in order to convey his rather plastic visions of the phenomenon of culture.[3]

It is through the title of his main work that Spengler exposes a negative, but not necessarily pessimistic, aspect of his essential message and thesis. All complete cultures have a final declining phase after which they end. He is convinced that his view represents the philosophy of his time, which he feels is only dimly sensed by his contemporaries. On the following pages we attempt to present the fundamentals of Spengler's thought with special regard to his method of interpretation, his response to Indian culture (civilization) and thought, his practical conclusions, and the possible forms of pessimism which might feature his outlook.

(1) The general approach

Spengler's main theme is the fate of the European or Western culture,

---

(2) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. viii-x. Similarly, his contemporary Berdyaev (History, p. 16) feels: "I must have a sense of history as something that is deeply mine, that is deeply my history, that is deeply my destiny." This personal (historical or anthropological) relationship with fate, or destiny, is particularly strong in our pessimists.

(3) Spengler's powerful and often persuasive style seems to spring from his central interest and feeling for characterological connections. (This quality also flavours the language of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, but is rather absent in the jejune and unsensual expression of Kant, Hegel or Fichte, a phenomenon already commented upon by Weininger (G.u.Char., p. 317). Koktanek (Speng., pp. 53-54) refers to Spengler's unusual tendency towards exchange and fusion of the senses, e.g. perceiving colours through music (cf. U.d.A., pp. 282-283), as "romantic synaesthesia".

which, in his opinion, is the only culture presently in the process of completion. In this connection he hypothesizes that all things historical contain certain fundamental biographical forms. Consequently, he introduces into his historical philosophy such concepts as the cycle of birth and death, youth, age, and lifetime. Likewise, he compares the different stages of a culture to the four seasons as they are known in Europe.(4) His method of interpreting cultures as essentially living forms is based on what he calls morphological analogy (as opposed to mathematical law which explains dead forms).(5) He explains that his approach is inspired by the biological concepts of homology, where organs are morphologically equivalent, and analogy, where their functions are equivalent.(6) On that basis he describes all major cultural events as following quasi-simultaneous cycles of rise, completion and decline. In this sense he would, for instance, consider late Buddhism and Roman Stoicism as simultaneous, homologous phenomena (whereas Buddhism and Christianity would not even be analogous). Seeing in the appearance of the various forms of history the expression, the signs, of a "manifestation of soul", Spengler visualizes a morphology of world history, i.e., of world as history. In his proposed last view of the world he wants to create an ultimate picture not of what has become but of what is becoming and living. Spengler refers to his approach as a theoretically inspired art of historical study and contemplation.(7) In fact, he wants to demonstrate that in modern thought history should replace nature as the traditional object of philosophy. (He refers to Kant's mathematical orientation of knowledge and Schopenhauer's contempt of history.)

(4) As his source of inspiration Spengler (U.d.A., p. 598(1)) indicates a short essay, "Geistesepochen", by Goethe.

(5) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 7-9; 149-151.

(6) He strives for an alternative to metaphysics. Hence Schröter (Met., p. 220) emphasizes that Spengler's "comparison does not want to be of the biological-scientific kind" (cf. our p. 134(39)); similarly, Balzer (Speng., p. 46) rejects "the accusation of Spengler having biologized history".

(7) Similarly, Trevor-Roper (Past) explains that history is no science.

(2) Awareness of history and culture: historical and ahistorical views

Regarding himself as a typical representative of Western culture, Spengler is highly conscious of the possible role of history in one's culture awareness.(8) Dismissing nature as the form (Gestalt) usually used by man at a high cultural level to attribute meaning to his direct sense impressions, he puts the main emphasis on history: he understands it as a form through which man can intensify his awareness of the connection between his own life and the living existence of this world; this results in the development of a strong sense of reality.(9) Spengler refers to man's awareness of these two forms, nature on the one hand and history on the other, as a primeval question of all human existence. He looks at these two forms as two possibilities of viewing the world (although not necessarily truth). Apart from man's general participation in history, Spengler says that in principle a person may be constantly aware of his life as an element within a far greater life-cycle of hundreds and thousands of years, or that he may experience it simply as a rather self-contained phenomenon, i.e., without any room for a world as history. Quite unlike our Schopenhauerians, Spengler now poses the question of how reality might be conceived of in the culture awareness of an ahistorical culture, such as the culture of Ancient Greece or India. The role which time played in those cultures, especially with regard to their attitudes toward the past, was, in Spengler's terminology, of a polar, non-periodical structure. (Illustrating this, he adds that the cosmos of the Greeks, as compared to the European view of the world,

(8) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 10-34. He distinguishes eight main civilizations to which he generally refers as "cultures", of which the Western (or Faustian), the ancient Greco-Roman, and the Indian one are of particular interest to us.

(9) He rejects superficial pragmatism imitating the methods of physical science while suppressing and confusing any sense for historical form (U.d.A., p. 39). Cf. our p. 34(47), on Schumacher's concern about "voluntary limitation" through science, and p. 154(20), on Husserl's "positivistic reduction".

is something which never becomes, but always was.) No matter how skilfully an ancient writer may have recorded historical events in his own manner, Spengler observes that this was done without any perspective vision which he considers an indispensable feature of a Western historian (compare Gebser's aperspective view, pp. 165, 165(43)).

Spengler feels that nothing could ever express the ahistorical Indian "soul" or cultural orientation more perfectly than the concept of nirvāna. He finds this ahistorical orientation reflected in the whole collection of Indian texts, where he does not find any mark of individual intellectual property or any development of specific personal thought, let alone any precise dates for the appearance of works whose authors might be known. Spengler contrasts this anonymous form of all Indian history, which of course also characterizes Indian philosophy, with the Western (Occidental) history of philosophy distinctly featured by books and individuals. Pointing to a similar fundamental difference in Greek culture and thought, he deplores that no great Greek, not even Socrates, revealed a significant inner attitude to history; Plato, for him, lacks any awareness of a historical development of his philosophy.

As regards his own philosophical task, Spengler sees it as necessitated by his specific Western historical culture awareness. "We people of Western European culture with our sense for history are the exception, and not the rule: "world-history" is our view of the world, not that of "humanity". For the man of India or Ancient Greece there never existed the view of a developing world, and some day, when the civilization of the Occident will have died, there may perhaps never again exist a culture including a type of man for whom "world-history" means such a powerful form of awareness."(10) He calls for scepticism with regard to the traditional Eurocentric perspective of the world, especially the view in which historical events lose significance in proportion to their distance from European "modernity" (the modern European cultural scene). He intends to overthrow this "Ptolemaic

---

(10) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 20-21. Meta-philosophically, the concept of "world-history" (or Weltgeschichte) does not make any sense.

system" of a universal history by his own "Copernican discovery" which wants to give each of its eight world cultures its own autonomous place in his historical outlook. Spengler, who considers these cultures as organisms which have natural, quasi-biological life-cycles, is strictly opposed to any cultural optimism which disregards all historical and organic experience and only projects "that desolate picture of a linear form of world-history".(11) Instead he sees each of his cultures as centering around its own idea, as having its own form, will, life, passion and death. These cultures flourish and age, together with their peoples, languages, truths, gods or landscapes, like plants; however, for Spengler there exists no aging "humanity" as such. What he tries to make us aware of instead are such fundamentally different, completely culture-specific forms as those of the fine arts, mathematics or physics - each one following its own culturally determined orientation within a determined life-span. "'Mankind', however, has as little aim, idea, plan, as has a species of butterflies or orchids. 'Mankind' is a zoological concept or an empty word."

With hermeneutic interest, we notice that Spengler criticizes the attitude of those Western historians or thinkers who tend to claim unconditional universal validity for their views, although their cultural perspectives may not reach beyond their limited Western European horizons. Paralleling Plato with Kant, Spengler explains that the Greek philosopher was perfectly all right - within the scope of his ancient culture - when by referring to mankind he meant Greeks, and not barbarians; however, he exposes a significant inadequacy in Kant's culture awareness by reminding us that in Kant's philosophical views, e.g. those on ethical ideals, he (naively) implied their validity for men of all kinds and times. In Spengler's opinion such an assumption is completely unfeasible, just as the fundamental, primeval concepts of Ancient Greek or Indian thought (such as λόγος, ātman, brahman) will forever remain inaccessible to the Western mind.(12) He holds

---

(11) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 28-29, 613-614.

(12) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 31, 732.

that an ultimate philosophy of the future could and should be completed (inasmuch as the metaphysically exhausted Western culture can still yield one); but not until the Occidental thinker has developed a sufficient understanding for the historical relativity of his results, as he emphasizes.

Spengler's awareness of culture - especially with regard to the limitation and autonomy of independent traditions - allows him to state in clear and simple terms what for any kind of inter-cultural comparison should be fundamentally understood (and what none of our earlier thinkers has ever seen or accepted so explicitly): "The form of a different culture speaks another language. For other people there exist different truths. For the thinker, all are valid or none."(13) Anticipating Gadamer's concern with one's own history (see p. 10), he considers it crucial for the historical philosopher to be aware that each thought lives in a historical world and thereby shares the fate of being transitory. From Spengler's point of view it is a fallacy to believe that the great philosophical questions have always been the same and that eventually they will receive some definite answers.(14) This "morphological" view is a direct reflection of his culture awareness and of his sense for culture-specific meaning. Along with his huge system of intuition and analogy, Spengler offers us a kind of pre-hermeneutic, i.e., a fundamental but self-limited approach to cultural comparison. He realizes that it lies within the nature of his view that it could only be created within a culture where the idea of a world-history (universal history) could be an issue and where the cultural development had reached some retrospective stage. (Only a comparatively small part of Spengler's outlook has a predictive

---

(13) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 34. Equally valid does not imply hermeneutically equally accessible.

(14) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 57. Koktanek (Speng., p. 328(2)) points to Spengler's Urfragen, p. 69: "Final questions have no answers, they are the answers themselves. Metaphysics is the asking of 'eternal questions' without an answer."

character.) His vision of the decline of the Occident renders the problem of civilization as it supposedly characterizes any world culture in its natural final phase, "as its inevitable fate". He defines civilizations as "the most artificial and extreme states of which a higher form of man is capable".(15) They mark a finishing stage, a phase of having become, which follows upon the phase of becoming, as death follows life.

(3) The physiognomic expression of "civilization"

The spiritual and material fate of a culture's late phase is determined by a highly intellectual, entirely unmetaphysical type of man. Such movements as Buddhism, Stoicism or Socialism receive their final cosmic "attunement" in response to some final mood (endgültige Weltstimmung) accompanying the demolition and decomposition of the now petrified forms of civilization.(16) Ideal participation in those movements remains a prerogative of some rich people, like Seneca in Ancient Rome. In any civilization, the rank and file in the big cities remains condemned to a life of panem et circenses; we can see this now reoccurring in battles for higher wages complemented by modern mass entertainments. The type of urban dwellers with a trained sense for cold facts but no true feeling for organically grown culture and tradition is inescapably tied to the life style of the big city - regardless of any taedium vitae, any weariness of such a life.(17) Rootless, the intellectual nomads of all civilizations - ubi bene ibi patria, as Spengler sees them - are at home in any big city (Pāṭaliputra as much as London), whereas they feel desperately alienated in the nearest village. In fact, even the wise, when seeking the solitude of nature, inevitably take along the spirit of civilization.

---

(15) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 43. According to a source in Schröter (Met., p. 88), this genetic differentiation between culture and civilization was already used by F. Tönnies (1887).

(16) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 44-63.

(17) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 677.

Politically this final phase always culminates in some form of imperialism, characterized by petrified empires which, simply through their unchallenged cultural and biological momentum rather than any creative resources, may perpetuate themselves for countless centuries. What Spengler describes as common to Rome, India and the other ancient civilizations, he does not hesitate to predict also for the West: "In this form the fate of the Occident will irrevocably manifest itself." He limits the central part of the coming phase in Western history to a few centuries. For him there is no prospect of an "endless going up and on in the direction of our present ideals and with fantastic time spans". He sees no choice but to accept civilization as it happens, with all the concomitant limitations inevitably imposed on us, although he expects that some will regret this fact and respond by "pessimistic philosophies and lyrics".

Regarding philosophy, Spengler says that the beginning of civilization or the winter of Western culture can be observed when "the emphasis of philosophy shifts from the abstract-systematical side to the practical ethical one, and the epistemological problem of knowledge becomes replaced by the problem of life (the will to live, the will for power or action)". Systematic philosophy, as Spengler sees it, was essentially completed with Kant. Thereafter we encounter, just as after Plato and Aristotle, "a typically metropolitan form of philosophy which is no longer speculative, but practical, irreligious and of an ethical-social orientation" (compare Gebser and the "axial period", p. 152). This form begins in the West with Schopenhauer, who makes the will to live, interpreted by Spengler as the creative power of life, the centre of his thought. Quite possibly Spengler was inspired by the Schopenhauerian concept of "will"; yet, the core of his specific form of pessimism is probably to be sought in his own character.(18)

---

(18) According to Lehmann (Dt.Phil., p. 340), the core of Spengler's "organological culture conception of the decline (Untergang)" goes back to the early Nietzsche's metaphysics. However, Koktanek (Speng., pp. 43-44), quoting Spengler at the age of eighteen - "an endless

(4) The methodology of Spengler's scepticism and "last philosophy"

Spengler, considering systematic philosophy and ethical philosophy as things of the past, emphasizes a third and last chance for Western thought to unfold itself once more, in a manner analogous to Ancient Greco-Roman scepticism. Such a final philosophy would have to suspend all phenomena by interpreting them as relative and historical. This last chance is no other than his own "so far unknown method of comparative historical mophology...a possibility, nay, a necessity". But in opposition to ahistorical Hellenistic scepticism, which, as we learn, amounts to the negation of philosophy, Spengler wants to accept the history of philosophy as the last serious theme of philosophy, which in the case of Western philosophy would have to concentrate on thought and culture as representing some organism. Scepticism, as it appears in Spengler's sketch of a final European philosophy, not only reflects the essential spirit of its stage of civilization but also dissolves the world outlook of the preceding cultural phase. He bases world as a reality on something historical, namely the ego, which is seen as a possibility followed by its realization (in some positivistic, totally unmetaphysical sense). From his view that everything that is has also become, he concludes that everything must be the expression of something living. Considering as outdated the idea that outer reality (the world) is a product of knowledge and an impulse (a cause) for ethical evaluations, he wants to create a philosophical morphology which treats outer reality as "primarily expression and symbol". He is well aware that through such a morphological approach the traditional striving for general and eternal truths - as it still exists in our Schopenhauerians - becomes superseded. He declares, with a view to the thought-determining force of culture, that "truths exist only with regard to a specific form of mankind". Unlike our previous philosophers, Spengler is very aware that his thought "only expresses and reflects the Occidental

---

willing goes through everything that nature made...eternity...you spare me insight into some existence full of hope" - adds that "he certainly has not got this fundamental belief from Schopenhauer, Wagner or Nietzsche."

soul as compared, perhaps, to the Greco-Roman or Indian one, and, that is to say, only, in its present stage".(19)

Spengler is motivated by a belief in change. His philosophy of history focuses on independent "cultures" as having their own individual biographical character. But, while Gadamer, in whose words "history means history of decay",(20) considers change in history through some rise, climax and decay as something which makes us aware of the change in our fate, resulting in a search for meaning in life, Spengler opts for some historicistic positivism by which he, perhaps involuntarily, stifles his potential for metaphysical development.(21) Instead, Spengler develops an unprecedented insight into what he calls "cultural morphology". This insight is based, rightly or wrongly, on some very clear ideas about the individual identities of cultures. Comparing European and Ancient Greco-Roman history he discovers cultural analogies which prompt him to look for similar correspondences with other cultures. One of the fundamental discoveries claimed by him is that each individual culture centres around some spiritaul essence, i.e. some kind of culture soul, which, far from having any causal function with regard to the form and history of an individual culture, leaves its unmistakable mark in all cultural phenomena. "Appearance is not just a fact for the intellect (Verstand) but is also expression of the soul (des Seelischen), i.e., not only object but also symbol - this is new, philosophically."(22) In contrast to Schopenhauer, Spengler develops

(19) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 34, 63-64.

(20) Gadamer, Kl.Schr.I, pp. 2-3.

(21) Lehmann (Dt.Phil., p. 335) writes: "He would like to be a metaphysical philosopher. But his metaphysical drive is hindered by the idea that metaphysics is an anachronism today" (1943). Schröter (Met., p. 10) mentions Spengler's metaphysical ambition: "Till the end Spengler talked about it as his main and favoured plan." Only hinted at by Spengler (U.d.A., p. 557), the metaphysical rudiments of his Urfragen were later edited by Koktanek.

(22) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 69-70.

his idea of fate by projecting his characterological experiences, directly and without any metaphysical substructure, onto a historical basis. But he is opposed to any scientific teleological attempts of explaining the phenomenon of life through "the mechanistic principle of a reversed causality" (note von Hartmann, Mainländer). In his judgement "teleology is the caricature of the idea of fate".(23)

Spengler identifies each of his world cultures in terms of its symbolic expression and by its specific historical position. This is of fundamental hermeneutic interest, since, as he emphasizes, each of these cultures develops its own forms of meaning which cannot be substituted by those of other cultures (see our hypothesis, p. 15). From this absolute connection between meaning and its cultural matrix Spengler derives the historical relativity of all meaning. In other words, for him each culture has its typical sets of beliefs on which are based its specific traditions of thought corresponding with its own form of truth. Since meaning cannot be directly penetrated from outside its original culture, there remains only the possibility of seeking access to it from within. Spengler uses his "physiognomical tact", a form of intuition, to assess this position adequately; i.e., he tries to determine the historical function of a certain meaning on the basis of its concomitants which, naturally for him, bear the characteristic traces of their culture phase.(24) He then steps comfortably across the culture gap by following the principle of his morphological analogy: the cycle of rise and decline follows the same fundamental pattern in all his cultures. It is exactly this quasi-synchronization of Spengler's cultural comparison which Gadamer would consider an inadmissible abstraction (p. 7). Based on some anticipation of meaning, Gadamer develops meaning from a hermeneutic movement between different cultural traditions, whereas Spengler transfers his complete set of cultural

---

(23) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 157.

(24) He may have received some impulse from the physiognomical and characterological studies of Ludwig Klages (1872 - 1919) but rejects his principal opinions (Briefe, p. 605, also pp. 347, 537).

stations and phases through which any meaning is supposed to pass when taken in its entirety. This means that for him the movement is contained in the pattern, instead of the pattern being subject to some "free" movement. Spengler describes the morphological relationships underlying his culture pattern as "strictly symmetrical in structure" and they reflect for him the "true style of history" (in accordance with his admittedly Western perspective). Unlike Gadamer, who pursues an inductive evolvement of meaning, Spengler actually sets out with a complete picture of the form and style of his historical truth. His outlook is, in fact, conceived deductively, i.e., his vision of a historical morphology stands at the beginning of his thought: "Finally I saw the solution clearly before me, in vast contours, with complete inner necessity, a solution which goes back to one single principle, which had to be found but had not been found so far, something which had followed me and attracted me from my earliest years, and which had vexed me because I knew that it was waiting to be understood, but could not grasp it."(25)

(5) Three morphological analogies of scepticism: in Western, Greek and Indian thought

Spengler illustrates the principles of the suggested final philosophy by drawing his morphological parallels between different cultures. We shall follow a selection of modern European, Ancient Greco-Roman and Ancient Indian analogies which feature the connections which he sees between the cultural spirit of Socialism, of Stoicism and of Buddhism. Essentially this final philosophy should bear testimony to the final general outlook and attitude in Western civilization. He observes a typical Western tendency to "pursue one's personal opinion in the name of all", and describes it as "ethical socialism".(26) Referring to

(25) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 70. Koktanek (Speng., ch. 2) gives an impressive account of the young Spengler's urge to express the incessant flow of his visionary historical phantasies.

(26) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 435-481. On p. 442 he writes "ethical

Nietzsche as an example of this ultimate socialist Western orientation, he points out that, despite his "anti-social" bearing, Nietzsche was actually incapable of following something like the Ancient ideal of apathy (ἀπάθεια), i.e., self-contentedness and disinterest in those worldly affairs the dominance of which appears to Spengler as the very aim of all Faustian (i.e. typically Western) activities. "But the whole Zarathustra, supposedly standing beyond good and evil, breathes the pain of having to see people how one does not like to have these, together with the deep, so utterly un-Ancient passion of devoting one's life to their change, in accordance, of course, with one's own and only possible ideals. That general transformation, exactly that, is ethical monotheism, which means - if we may use the word in a new and deeper sense - socialism."

Both von Hartmann and Mainländer pursue, as we have seen, their personal pessimistic ideal of such a general transformation. But, Spengler considers all reformers socialists and, therefore, typically Western. In which manner this may include Spengler himself, we shall see below (pp. 134-137). As regards this common principle, he finds it irrelevant whether a particular philosopher denies the will to live, like Schopenhauer, or affirms it, like Nietzsche. "The essential thing is that Schopenhauer feels the entire world as will, as movement, energy, direction; in this he is the ancestor of all ethical modernity."(27)

---

socialism: this is the spirit of action - ranging into the distance of space, the moral pathos of the third dimension, as it is featured by a primeval feeling of care for one's contemporaries as well as for those to come - which pervades this entire culture." On p. 463: "Ethical socialism is the ever attainable maximum of a sense of life seen from the aspect of purposes" and, despite the social pretenses he sees in it, it represents for him "the will to power". For the political and nationalistic background of Spengler's preference of the term "socialism" (probably a reflection of the Zeitgeist) see Koktanek (Speng., pp. 166-186) on "Spengler and the ideas of 1914".

(27) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 436.

Spengler figures that the Western will to power does not allow for any tolerance (which he considers a typically Ancient ideal). In the West this phenomenon can only be interpreted as a fallacy or a symptom of decline. In fact, it is in the nature of any Western "movement" that it seeks victory; this includes the tendency to reform, which is something he considers equally alien to both the Ancient Greek and the Ancient Indian equivalent "attitude". As compared to the Western mind, Greek and Indian character appear to him much more closely related to one another. For instance, in Indian Buddha statues he notices an expression of "static isolation" that reminds him strongly of Zenon's ataraxia (ἀταραξία; compare Schopenhauer's differentiation, p. 57), included in the ideal of Stoicism: "The statuelike restfulness, the will-less ethos. And furthermore, there is that Buddhist ideal of nirvāna, a very late formula, but totally Indian and retraceable back to Vedic times: is that not closely related to katharsis?...In fact, Socrates, Epicurus and especially Diogenes by the River Ganges - that would be quite imaginable. Diogenes in some Western European metropolis would be an insignificant fool."(28) We feel reminded of Hegel (p. 46) when Spengler describes nirvāna as the epitomy of the ahistorical Indian mentality: "The Indians, whose nirvāna also appears in their lack of any sense for time, had no clocks and consequently no history, no biographical memories, no concern about the future. What we eminently historically-oriented people call Indian history, has come about without the slightest awareness of itself. The millennium of Indian culture from the Vedas right down to the Buddha affects us like the movementes of a sleeping person. Here life really was a dream. Nothing is more remote from this Indianness than the millennium of Western culture.... The history of Western Europe is a wanted, that of India a suffered fate."(29)

Notwithstanding the internal individual culture differences and resemblances, the great overall tendencies in Buddhism, Stoicism

---

(28) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 443.

(29) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 174.

and Socialism reveal to Spengler that they are morphologically equivalent phenomena which in each case mark the beginning of the stage of civilization. He assures us that we can always observe the same trend: from Socrates and the Buddha onwards, and in connection with such names as Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche, "culture becomes dialectically annihilated". After Nietzsche nihilism rises: "Socrates was a nihilist, so was the Buddha." While the man of culture lived, without being aware of it, essentially for inner values, the civilized person goes, quite consciously, by the facts of the outer world. What was once felt as fate Spengler sees as now being interpreted in terms of cause and effect. "From now on people are materialists, in a manner characteristic of their specific civilization, regardless of whether they want it or not, and whether Buddhist, Stoic and Socialist doctrines assume religious forms or not."(30) Regarding civilized philosophy, he observes that, with life being treated as an object of study, morals, also, become classified as a problem: "For a cultured person morals means the morals he has got; for a civilized person they are the ones he is seeking." Looking back at Kant's and Plato's presentations of ethics, Spengler explains that they are essentially still "dialectical play with concepts, just rounding off their metaphysical systems - in fact, quite dispensable. From Zenon and Schopenhauer onwards this is changed." Spengler explains that the phase of civilized ethics is featured by contrived systems which lack the greatness of the previous style of intuitive metaphysics. (N.B., Plotinus' metaphysics, as we are told, actually reflects the spirit of the younger Arabic culture.(31)) In other words, civilized life, having lost its potential of spontaneous inner self-regulation, requires practical moral systems which provide some outer orientation instead. Analogously, before the rise of Buddhism "the doctrines of Yoga and Vedānta also had little room for formal ethics". Only afterwards did moral philosophy develop whereas metaphysics became part of the background. In order to substantiate

---

(30) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 451.

(31) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 491.

his claim of the merely civilized, unmetaphysical character of Buddhism, Spengler refers to the Buddha's sermon of the Four Noble Truths (see pp. 225, 229). Believing that "it is rooted in the rationalist atheist Sāmkhya philosophy", he assumes that the original form of Buddhism must have been devoid of any religious elements in terms of metaphysical beliefs. He imagines that there is also in Buddhism considerable materialism, analogous, but by no means identical with that of other cultures. Reminding us of Mainländer, he intimates that Buddhism displays a rather "mechanical" approach in its use of the "Brahmanical concept of karman which is for our thought an almost unimaginable idea of being which perfects itself through action, and which we find frequently enough treated quite materialistically like some universal substance in the process of change". Such materialism, as Spengler explains, is only the outer counterpart of the essential final nihilism which each civilization expresses in its own manner. The Faustian nihilist destroys his former ideals dynamically, the Ancient nihilist sceptically lets them crumble, and the Indian abandons them by withdrawing into himself (compare Gebser's time-ocean and world-cave, pp. 145-150). Spengler senses that the phenomenon of Buddhism cannot easily be rendered in Western terminology. But still he takes the liberty of talking of a "Stoic nirvāna"; he goes on to say that "also, the concept of a Socialist nirvāna can be justified if we look at the withdrawal from the struggle for existence which European tiredness likes to conceal under such catchwords as world-peace, humanitarianism, or brotherliness of all people. But nothing of that gets anywhere near the strangely deep concept of the Buddhist nirvāna."[32] What he means is that each civilization has its own way of exemplifying the common morphological principle. Hence he feels no contradiction in assuming something quasi-Stoic in Buddhism, something quasi-Buddhistic in Stoicism. This has at times been misunderstood.[33]

---

(32) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 457. Still in 1947, Jennings (Ved.Buddh., p. lxxxi) rigorously paralleling Buddhism and Stoicism on the basis of an impressive synopsis of physiognomical resemblances, prefers to assume "similarity of initial premises".

(33) E.g., note the manner in which von Glasenapp (Indb., pp. 129-131)

It is not the meanings as such which Spengler would exchange in his comparisons; instead, he would equate his cultural patterns and mechanisms. Thus the popular expression of each civilization's late outlook is always essentially the same. It recurs as the diatribe - the sermon in Buddhist India, Ancient rhetoric, or Western journalism. This, as we learn, is geared to satisfy not "humanity" as such, but the "masses" as they appear in all civilizations. Since, in the case of the West, they follow only the superficial aspects of "ethical socialism" (which promises them some carefree happiness) these masses are naturally incapable of understanding "the magnificent idealization of its purpose and, therefore, also that of work". Spengler predicts that this ethical ideal, which may presently manifest itself in the right to work, will "in the final, most terrible stages...culminate in the duty to work". This is the point at which the fulfilment of Socialism - "in opposition to Stoicism and Buddhism - becomes tragic". Spengler's verdict is that the Nordic, the Western soul has irretrievably used up its inner potential. "This soul was will, and nothing else." But all that remains of this originally creative will is its dynamic momentum, an aimless drive and passion for creation, a form without content. The ideas are borrowed which hereafter support the now common lie of resurgent continuity. Indeed, Mainländer's individualistic double movement of formation combined with annihilation may serve as an acute illustration for that point in civilization.

The final ethical outlook into the void is for Spengler the natural result of a decline of metaphysics, as he observes it in all aging cultures. As he explains, in the course of this change from a cultured to a civilized mode of thought, pure thinking is replaced by moral philosophy which focuses on the practical side of life. Metaphysics, after being pushed into an ancillary role, becomes eventually almost superfluous. In Spengler's opinion, Kant's thought

---

refuses to reconcile Spengler's negative hermeneutic awareness of Buddhist nirvāṇa with his own purely philological perspective.

still centred on pure reason, not on practical reason. But from then on the situation becomes reversed: Schopenhauer's first three books, as we learn, are only there to support his fourth (on the affirmation and negation of the will to live). As Spengler correctly points out, Schopenhauer did not (as von Hartmann sees it) derive his pessimism from his metaphysics, but his metaphysics from his pessimism (see p. 64), while Nietzsche going even further, did not hesitate to "satisfy his need for metaphysics, quickly and often quite inadequately, with the help of some books". From Spengler's point of view there are no "eternal questions" in philosophy; each culture has its own inherent set of primeval questions which from its very beginning determine its course. Thus, both Hegel and Schopenhauer expressed the will to power in their personal manner but in accordance with the theme of their time. Hence, Spengler considers any philosophy originating from Hegel and Schopenhauer and virtually all "representative philosophy of the 19th century as only ethical and as only social criticism in a productive sense and nothing else".(34) Spengler explains that in his own voluntarist outlook he consciously puts time, direction and fate before a more rational application of the ideas of space and causality.(35) He feels that Schopenhauer misunderstood Kant's "magnificent, not easily accessible intuition" of the "world as appearance" when he transformed it into the "world as a brain phenomenon" while the will, the true essence of man, had to remain blind. Spengler, explicitly despising this view and rejecting any metaphysical speculation, describes man's awakening from a state of primitivity into some cultural consciousness as a dual psychological phenomenon: "The birth of the ego and that of the fear of existence (Weltangst) are one and the same thing."(36) Schopenhauer, as he judges, was only forestalling some of the materialism which was already looming on the horizon of Western thought: "His system is anticipated Darwinism which only uses Kant's language and the concepts of the Indians as

---

(34) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 472.

(35) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 393.

(36) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 815. Cf. p. 139(56).

a disguise."[37] Moreover, Schopenhauer was the first one in his line who realized with horror the true nature of his own outlook - "this is the root of his pessimism" - while the later ones, especially Nietzsche, tried to get enthused by the kind of pragmatic optimism which underlies "the struggle for existence". Feeling that the ethical dynamism (the "thou shalt") of the European outlook has reached its peak, Spengler opens up his final view on the historical fulfilment of Western civilization: "In order to impose onto the world the form of his will, Faustian man sacrifices himself."[38]

(6) Spengler's practical self-exemplification and ethnocentrism

Spengler never created a genuine metaphysical complement for his morphology.[39] Instead he tried to exemplify his thought practically by playing an active advisory part in the fulfilment of Germany's political role in the world, in strict accordance with his morphological theories.[40] Spengler must have thought that his outlook contained some special human value (irrespective of any scientific, objective value), some form of "truth". He sees his truth - consciously, from his relativistic Western civilized historical point of view - in terms of "fate". By this he means the consummation of

---

(37) Spengler, U.d.A., pp. 473-474.

(38) Spengler, U.d.A., p. 477.

(39) Schröter (Met., pp. 189-198) argues that Spengler concentrated too much on what is past (das Vergangene) rather than on the passing (das Vergehen); that he neglected the metaphysical potential of his own analogy of a child's awakening ego-consciousness (including the role of fear) with the rise of his cultures (U.d.A, p. 107); and that, thus, he slipped metaphysically, epistemologically and ethically onto the levels of naturalism, scepticism and biologism.

(40) He declares (U.d.A., pp. 58,60) that "the first-class philosopher always exemplifies", like the Presocratics or Plato, deploring that the philosophers of his own age lack this sense for a need for practical involvement in such tasks as are presented by politics or commerce.

culture through the fulfilment of its original impulse and its inherent form, will and soul. Like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Spengler apparently tries to reform something in human thought which could not be reformed philosophically (perhaps the ability to see the truth - his truth!). However, while Schopenhauer still aims at some metaphysical "correction" of the human outlook, Spengler thinks it necessary to separate "practical" thought from "unpractical" metaphysics. This allows him to connect his vision of "truth" with the social "reality" of man's cultural fate. In the case of Western civilization the philosophical expression of this fate centres around his ethical socialism.

From Spengler's point of view it would be impossible to separate one's consciousness or one's self-awareness from one's culture. In the case of the strongly ego- and personality-oriented Occidental culture, Spengler feels that, having entered the phase of scepticism, "we late people of the West...do not want any more phrases, we want ourselves".(41) Self-centredly, "the three latest peoples of the West (England, France, Germany) have striven for three ideal forms of existence...liberty, equality, solidarity".(42) Epitomizing the different national characters, these three ideals are different forms of response to the same basic question of power: does the individual will have to succumb to the collective will, or is it the other way around? As Spengler sees it, the English nature decides for individual power, liberalism, inequality. The French nature denies power to all; no subordination, no order, equality, in other words ideal anarchy. Two forms of democracy. The German, or more precisely Prussian, nature decides, quite theoretically, that power belongs to the whole, which has to be served by the individual (including the king). This attitude, illiberal, anti-democratic and anti-revolutionary, produces a kind of "authoritative socialism", as opposed to English individualism, which aims at capitalism (with

---

(41) Spengler, Pol., p. 4.

(42) Spengler, Pol., p. 14.

a potential for some form of "private socialism").[43] Both the English and the Prussian ideal - remaining mutually incomprehensible - represent competing forms of the same modern (ethical) socialism. This final view of the world and attitude towards it, being devoid of any metaphysical culture, manifests itself in a common Western drive for ultimate material dominance of the "entire planet" - imperialism as the typical final stage of all civilizations.[44] These political aspects of Spengler's morphological views apparently furnish the theoretical basis of his peculiar nationalism: stunned and perturbed by the failure of the German Revolution and the outcome of the war, he begins to reassess the immediate political situation.[45] He discovers that it was the fatal impact of English social ideas which had been present since the time of Napoleon. Unsuitable and detrimental for the German mentality, they aroused a kind of would-be socialism in the heads of the semi-intellectuals (followed by the "uprising of the Marxist proletariat in 1918") while true socialism was uselessly dying in the trenches.[46]

Spengler who, as far as his insight goes, usually attempts to portray a balanced picture of the intrinsic values of any culture or nation, apparently tries to account for his ethnocentrism: "Only England possesses today what one could call social culture - another kind, a more philosophical one, it has not got - it has deepness in its superficiality; the nation of philosophers and poets (Germany), so often, only proves some superficiality in depth."[47] After this little encouraging statement on the remaining philosophical potential of the declining West, Spengler admits his conviction that, after all, the Prussian character harbours some less utilitarian value: some deep

---

(43) Spengler, Pol., pp. 15, 32, 46-47.

(44) Spengler, Pol., p. 24.

(45) Spengler, Briefe, pp. 111-115.

(46) Spengler, Pol., pp. 6-9.

(47) Spengler, Pol., pp. 37.

inner independence which is inaccessible to its only worthy (the English) opponent.[48] In his nationalistic commitment Spengler betrays a secret yearning for some metaphysical ideal - some form of freedom from this world as he describes it - and which his outlook is not allowed to yield. Spengler's political ideas, regardless of how important they may have appeared to anyone including himself, are only a by-product of his culture morphology which includes a personal, unphilosophical need for exemplification.[49] Spengler knows of his ethnocentrism, but finds no way out of it, neither hermeneutically nor metaphysically. Having declared that historically he is in a post-metaphysical position, he now seems - bewitched by the magic of his culture cycle - incapable of developing his own originally intended metaphysical outlook which might have dissolved his morphological fate.

(7) Spengler's physiognomical pessimism: the petrification of meaning

Spengler's skilful inclusion of himself as a morphological feature within his outlook, complemented by his apodictic style, may occasionally make his readers forget that, after all, his account of this world renders a very personal view. But, his philosophical position is marked by his time, by the Zeitgeist which no longer sustains a feeling of unstrained European cultural identity (so natural to Schopenhauer, so dispensable to Gebser).[50] Spengler reacts to his social and political situation by returning to society

---

(48) Spengler, Pol., pp. 32, 39.

(49) By reversing the roles of thought and expression in Spengler his intention has been misinterpreted and reduced to a "political motivation of his thought" (e.g., cf. Murjahn, Speng., pp. 233; 209-210) which supposedly had the sole aim of "founding some activistic Lebensphilosophie and of serving his nation" (p. 220).

(50) According to Lübbe's perfectly valid generalization (in Speng. heute, p. x) Spengler's work "demonstrates the increasing problem of identity which, in complex and dynamic civilizations, affects us individually and culturally".

a "clarified" and structured version of its own dim feeling of crisis or uncertainty.[51]

Apart from his tendency to exert some reformative, educative influence,[52] he believes in the possibility of some outer change, some practical change, in connection with his thought.[53] This in turn is rooted in some inevitable inner change which he observes in all cultures, namely, man's transformation from a (potentially) metaphysically minded being of infinite hopes into a sceptic or nihilist left with such prospects as a Stoic ataraxia, a Buddhist nirvāna or a Socialist self-sacrifice. Metaphysics, unlike his own characterological morphological view of history, has in his eyes never provided any firm and reliable solution. For Spengler any speculative truth - and that includes metaphysical pessimism - can never be more than just morphologically and historically relative. (Metaphysics, in fact, is antihistorical.) In his "final" answer he wants to be practical. Denying that humanity as such has any ultimate aim (in this he does admit teleological pessimism[54]), he sees a distinct aim for man in the dignified consummation of his specific culture cycle.

---

(51) Popper (Op.Soc.II, p. 76): "An element of blank despair is unmistakable in the 'grim' activism that is left to those who foresee the future and feel instrumental in its arrival."

(52) Spengler (Aufsätze, p. 73) announces that understanding the character and direction of one's culture in combination with our potential for free individual decisions allows us "for the first time education in a vast sense".

(53) Popper (Hist., p. 161), suggesting that attempts to establish the predictability of historical change may well be motivated by some personal fear of change, concludes: "It almost looks as if the historicists were trying to compensate themselves for the loss of an unchanging world by clinging to the faith that change can be foreseen because it is ruled by an unchanging law."

(54) Spengler, Aufsätze, pp. 73-74.

Spengler sees no higher alternative; however in the case of failure, man would have to face a cultural void. Before, after and outside culture - i.e. without history - humanity is only a "zoological concept" and existence is senseless. That means that within the boundaries of his own definitions of culture and history Spengler visualizes a very natural possibility of fulfilment. (Hence, here he explicitly refuses to be called a pessimist.(55) And he is certainly not a defeatist.) Beyond those boundaries man is also essentially beyond any (cultural) comment from Spengler. (This, too, precludes pessimism.)

Spengler's method is originally deductive, although he gets around to demonstrating how his observations must result in one "system", which technically represents the originally conceived idea with all its philosophical consequences. Strictly speaking, his hermeneutic, operating with morphological analysis and physiognomical tact, demands total commitment to the idea of cultural fulfilment (as opposed to existential senselessness). It seems crucial to our overall study that within his closed culture unit he does not provide for any relative commitment, i.e., one which would use culture itself merely as a basis for some meta-philosophical breakthrough. Rather, he transfers meaning directly from one of his cultures to another; he does not allow for any meaning to originate between and beyond the cultures from some interpretative movement. Consequently, he has to operate within some kind of monadological captivity.(56) Imprisoned with the

---

(55) Spengler (Aufsätze, p. 63): "One could say fulfilment instead of decline...without changing the actual meaning of the concept." (P. 75:) "Pessimism means seeing no more tasks. I see so many still unaccomplished..."

(56) Having deliberately excluded any psychological descriptions of Spengler's character, we feel that retrospectively two autobiographic statements which emphasize his sense of captivity may be of interest (quoted after Koktanek, Speng., pp. 13 and 16, Eis heauton, ined., 78b; and 105, also 94). From as far back as his sixth year Spengler recalls: "When I look at my life, there has been one feeling which has really dominated everything: fear. Fear of the future, fear of

"will" which specifically features his own culture, the will to live, to die, to power (Schopenhauer, Mainländer, Nietzsche), he can only follow that will into tragic self-sacrifice for the sake of the whole. His own physiognomical scepticism, as he calls it, is inspired by the idea of a Socialist nirvāna cum Stoic exemplification. It seems obvious that Spengler expects his readers to take this kind of equation with a grain of salt. He himself has announced the uniqueness and ultimate inscrutability of all culture-specific meaning (justly referring to Schopenhauer's Indian appropriations as a disguise). He also knows that he has achieved his morphological analogies (i.e., not content equations!) from a Western point of view. But beyond his physiognomical tact, which has admittedly led him to the discovery of certain most interesting cultural analogies, he has apparently never wondered about the historical structures of the self-understanding of other cultures.

Spengler, like Nietzsche, claims explicitly what already Hegel had expressed implicitly: that the tradition of instruction, i.e. of philosophical thinking, is always culturally, naturally, given. He ignores the fact that Buddhism itself does not assume at all that there is culture and the fact that its tradition of instruction is non-cultural (see p. 217). Any change of mode of instruction in India was cultural only inasmuch as our point of view is cultural. On the other hand, in Socrates, culture was always present, but he tried to rid himself of its influence in the interest of his philosophical thinking. Similarly, but again only from our meta-philosophical point of view, Buddhism in striving for the total liberation of thinking, implies first of all liberation from culture. It characterizes Spengler, who (like Hegel) derives an axiological function from his category of culture, that he seeks rigid analogies instead of some hermeneutically aware "meta-

---

relatives, fear of people, fear of sleep, of the authorities, of thunderstorms, of war, fear, fear." At the age of eleven he experiences for the first time his ego as locked into a cave, and furthermore: "Since my fifteenth year I have always...had the feeling that my ego sits deeply locked into my body, being connected with the world only through the eyes." (For his cave awareness also see p. 150(11).)

cultural" form of self-expansion or liberation from existing culture patterns. Whenever he tries to convey content he does it in strict connection with physiognomical form which itself determines the role, the degree and the relative value of the "reality" or "truth" of any such content - and stifles his own metaphysical thought (for example, on "will", "soul", "fate"). Hence, for Spengler all philosophical solutions must somehow be manifested on a practical socio-cultural level (as exemplified through his own nationalism), i.e., he cannot agree to any final solution on the awareness level as such.(57)

To Spengler, as to Schopenhauer, India essentially appears as an aesthetical, moral feature, i.e., it plays a formal role, in which it also provides some axiological calibration. Regarding culture, we remember that Schopenhauer simply implied it in his search for antecedents: he was clearly motivated by the Upanisads inasmuch as he derived from them a certain philosophical form (which later merged in his principal presentations). But Spengler immediately forced his own form onto his brief but very explicit culturological interpretation of India. In neither case can we notice that the meanings derived from Indian culture reflect any genuine search for the actual content with regard to its meaningfulness in an Indian context. In other words, we find no true methodological approach of the kind suggested in our Introduction. Spengler, unlike Schopenhauer, is culturally absolutely committed, of which he is highly aware. Yet, from our point of view he displays a noteworthy cultural naivety which we find complemented by the nonchalance with which he chooses the moral and aesthetical values used in shaping his morphological outlook. His manner of locking these values into a nihilistic state of petrification indicates a pessimistic attitude on the anthropological level; teleologically, his idea of absolute cultural confinement marks him as a historical pessimist. Spengler's final cultural scepticism is a projection of

---

(57) Ulmen (in Speng.heute, p. 136) writes "Spengler's so-called 'pessimism'...does not describe the mental state of an individual, but a shaping of historical consciousness" (i.e., a historically oriented cultural attitude).

his personal scepticism, which forms and feeds his reactions and visions, and which is at the basis of his self-denying physiognomical pessimism.[58]

---

[58] Spengler's conception of culture defines his personal reaction to it. Hence, Sorokin (Crisis, pp. 16, 23), rejecting Spengler and asking for a more optimistic response to the crisis of the West, cannot help suggesting to "shift to another basic form of culture". Toynbee (Downfall, p. 10) in turn accepts that due to "inward and spiritual causes" the Western civilization is likely to "break down and disintegrate and finally dissolve", but he revolts against the idea of "any inexorable law" in it. Bagby (Culture, p. 181) criticizes Toynbee for neglecting, in contrast to Spengler, any systematic use of a clear concept of culture.

Chapter Five

Gebser: the Indian complement - an arational rapprochement, or chaos?

Jean (Hans) Gebser (1905 - 1973) is our other important cultural thinker. Instead of attempting to continue or to replace his forerunners, he proposes to "integrate" their views in his own. Far less dynamic than Spengler, but much more careful in his thought and language, he opens up a cosmopolitan perspective which, culturologically, seems apt to lead us through, and perhaps out of, our problem of German metaphysical pessimism (notwithstanding our comparative Indian elucidations which follow). Gebser, as compared to our other thinkers, makes the most extensive use of India (and Asia as a whole) by including it as a vital and active part in his description of the human consciousness. While from our point of view India plays an outstanding role in the development of his outlook, the pessimistic element, the changing metaphysical aspect of which we are trying to trace, finds a very subtle expression in Gebser's non-absolute and distinctly conditional warnings regarding man's universal self-identification.

We shall show how the metaphysical concept of pessimism undergoes the usual change in accordance with the thinker's cultural awareness. In Gebser's approach the overcoming of the traditional time concepts in all existing cultures plays a central role. This

time-awareness not only distinguishes Gebser from our other thinkers, but may also provide a major clue for our own understanding of the different development of the cultural modes of human self-identification in the past two and a half thousand years. Being fully aware of his naturally Western starting-point, he assumes an inseparable but flexible polar connection of East and West on the basis of various evolutionary stages of the human consciousness. This developmental connection, he insists, must be understood with a view to one very essential target: the integration of the various forms of consciousness as they characterize both Oriental and Occidental thought, despite the different historical courses of these two traditions.

Gebser has illustrated his outlook very tangibly in his Asienfibel (i.e. "Asia for beginners"). This interpretative description of the Oriental mind was inspired by his impressions from an extensive journey in 1961 through South Asia and the Far East.

(1) Asia and Europe

Gebser's decision to go and see how Asia lives and is, and why Asians think and act the way they do, was consciously based on his assumption that, after all, it is possible to understand Asia, although we must be aware of the natural difficulty of this problem. He warns of the dangers of any rash, naive, ethnocentric, or random emotional judgements. His basic suggestion is to attune one's own Western mind to the living phenomena of Asia, implying that if we draw our cultural circle wide enough we can come to understand some form of common Asian mind. Thus he observes that "there is an Asian way of thinking, just as there is a European one".(1) His initial conclusion from this attuned approach is that the Western mind is by no means "more advanced" than that of the East, and that Europe (including North America) and Asia do in fact constitute the two main complementary spiritual poles of mankind (paralleled by a similar, but more rudimentary relationship between South America and Africa). Hermeneutically, this significant step does not follow any ontological

(1) Gebser, Asf., p. 15.

circle movement but instead tries to attune the process of understanding to a morphological polarity.

(2) The we without an ego, and the time-ocean

Attempting to isolate one of the fundamental determinants of a person's culture awareness, Gebser points to what he considers as a crucial difference in the Eastern and Western ego concepts. He holds that a person's self-identification with his ego, or, in fact, the question of whether he focuses on a strictly individual personal ego at all, cannot be elucidated adequately without some understanding of his habitual time conception. He briefly illustrates what he means by referring to a significant little feature of the Hindi language: instead of the three distinct concepts for "yesterday", "today" and "tomorrow" common in European languages, Hindi operates with only two such notions, āj and kal. While āj may be rendered by "today", there exists no "yesterday" as such or "tomorrow" as such; kal, rather, refers to some "timeless time-ocean" from which a perpetually fleeting tiny point, the āj, emerges.(2)

Through this example from language Gebser wants to direct our attention to his observation that the Asian mentality is more inclined to relate existence to some undifferentiated time-ocean than to differentiate consciously between a before and an after. Gebser feels that for the Indian, and the Asian in general, "since he has no actual time concept, life is timeless like the time-ocean, or like death itself, where even for us time does not exist. How then should he distinguish between life and death, or perhaps even attribute a value to life? How could it be other than that ultimately life is not really worth living?"(3) Gebser finds a prime example for this general Indian

(2) Gebser, Asf., p. 21. In Tucci (India, pp. 11-12) we read that India has lived in a dream state so far (ha vissuto sognando), and that its history is like an ocean without horizon (un mare uguale ove manca l'orizzonte).

(3) Gebser, Asf., p. 48 (also pp. 37, 45-46, 119). He ignores that

attitude in the Buddhist concept of nirvāna, to which he refers as a wishful idea. According to his interpretation "it is the sinking away into the bodiless, the essenceless, it is the extinction of being and non-being, it is the return into the formless void (from which after all everything ultimately originates), it is the final liberation from the obligation of reincarnation and thus the freedom from suffering, since life is nothing but suffering and, therefore, not worth living".(4) (This projection of pessimism into Indian thought follows a similar ethnocentric perspective as we have noticed in Schopenhauer, von Hartmann, or Mainländer. Compare pp. 62-63, 85, 91-92.)

In Gebser's opinion this Indian orientation is decided by the question of whether an individual is used to identifying his ego with some strictly personal self or with some general "we", as may be manifested by the group identity of the Asian extended family. "It makes a great, a very great difference, whether one lives, one dies, or whether I live and shall die. When an Asian dies, usually no ego dies which can or must be afraid of the loss of itself, and consequently there is no fear of death." Gebser is not referring to the physical side of death, but to what from a Western point of view could be considered its metaphysical aspect. The ahamkāra - or the ego-formation, as he puts it - cannot be an Indian ideal, "since for the orthodox Hindu the ego is the tie which hinders his return to the unqualified

---

with respect to India time cannot be treated as a Kantean form of perception (Anschauungsform), but that, according to Buddhist thought, time functions as some 'objective substantial fluid' in which are merged all contingent beings. Each dharma exists for ever, only its mode of existence changes in accordance with its future, present or past phase. Moreover, beyond an empirical divisible time substance there exists an absolute time, or substance of immortality (amrta) (see Schayer, Time, pp. 2-15).

(4) Gebser, Asf., p. 119. Cf. Olga Plumacher (Pessim., p. 22) who in 1884 reverberates the contemporary pessimistic verdict on Brahmanism as being essentially concerned with the "annihilation of individuality by submergence into the absolute".

nirvāna and prevents his extinguishing submergence in the undifferentiated time-ocean".(5) Gebser underlines that this weakness of the individual ego in favour of a predominant collective "we" should not be considered as a general weakness of the Asian mentality as such, or even as a deliberate insult to Asians. In fact, he feels that the Asian psyche is more balanced than the Western one which has, parallel with the development of its sense for individuality, suffered considerably from increasing ego-mania. This problem forms a noteworthy part of Gebser's concern about the development of the polar cultural relationship of East and West which in his opinion, also, has reached a critical stage, as we shall see below (pp. 150, 160, 171).

In his attempt to provide a comparative view of Asia, although quite consciously from a Western viewpoint, he also pays attention to the manner in which Asia responds to Western principles. He notices that the Oriental mind commits itself willingly to the requirements of Western science and technology but only for as long as necessary. Beyond that point it prefers to dwell in those historically earlier layers of consciousness where it finds relief from the necessity of mental differentiation. Even Indian philosophy, he finds, prefers more flowing, less contoured concepts. It appears to Gebser that for the Indian mind, ultimately, "everything is the same"; that from a Western mystical point of view this may also be so does not release us from the obligation to differentiate. He also suggests that, even if a Western person wanted to return to the egoless level by submerging into the timeless time-ocean, he would probably not succeed (compare von Hartmann, p. 83). Such a venture would require the revocation of the complete European evolvement into egoness with all its positive and negative concomitants - this, however, would amount to the death of European being. Gebser sees a different way for the differentiating European consciousness: it must outgrow its ego-centredness and reach some over-awake state of ego-freedom.(6)

---

(5) Gebser, Asf., p. 45.

(6) Gebser, Asf., pp. 87-89, 92-93.

This state of consciousness, he adds, must not be confused with nirvāṇa (also see p. 247).(7)

Pointing to a common source of error typical to many Eurocentric views of the Indian consciousness, Gebser elucidates a significant feature of the doctrine of reincarnation. He says, apart from the above mentioned negation of the ego which, as he believes, already plays a role in the Vedas and Upanisads, the majority of the Hindus has not even developed an ego in the European sense; they are ego-less. That means, there is no question of the reincarnation of some form of ego such as exists in Western consciousness. The "souls" may well transmigrate, but without any egos. In other words, this doctrine of reincarnation does not concentrate on a movement of strictly individual, personal souls which return to this world. "It is the cycle of the soul principle which is consummated here. It is impersonal, hence, ego-less soul fate which, dying, sinks back into the time-ocean and which with a new birth constellates again in some enveloping form (Hilsenform) composed of those elements which had remained undissolved from some past life."(8)

Recalling Schopenhauer's view on this aspect of Indian culture, we can - if we go along with Gebser - now judge more clearly how cleverly Schopenhauer, despite his culturally rather undiscriminating approach to Indian philosophy, evaluated the Indian belief in metempsychosis when he felt that, although it was not true, we could for all practical purposes treat it as if it were true. A rational dividing line between these two aspects, which Schopenhauer had juxtaposed quite pragmatically, is now drawn by Gebser on the basis of his distinction between an Eastern and a Western form of self-awareness. Regarding the practical implications, Gebser reminds us of the typically Western attitude of interfering actively and deliberately with one's own fate and that of other individuals, whereas for the Indian the course of life is determined by some supra-individual fate. If we use a European perspective, our fate, or destiny, would have to be considered as something coming to us

(7) Gebser, Wandlung, p. 157.

(8) Gebser, Asf., p. 62.

from the future as it were, and susceptible to influence from our present actions.[9] However, the Indian view assumes that the essence of fate must be lying at the core from the very beginning or, as Gebser reckons, somewhere in his (actually quite un-Indian) timeless time-ocean. From a European point of view, the Indian, even if he had the personal desire to face destiny, could not do so, since it lies behind him as karma, as a latent condition which is actualized during his emergence in life. According to Gebser, the Indian, lacking an egocentric form of will, accepts as authority his fate to which he attunes himself in a rather undisrupted, harmonious manner. In this intentionless atmosphere thoughts and events still follow their invisible, natural relationships - and only to the rational European mind these undisrupted junctures of events may appear as surprising or miraculous. "The age-old so to speak magical connectedness of events, which suffers no disturbance through ego-oriented or rationally directed wishes, worries and fears, is still alive there and works naturally there, while to us it appears either ridiculous or mysterious, provided we are, after all, able to accept this one-time universal potential which in Asia still exists."[10]

For Gebser the Asian world is not awake in the Western sense of the word. "In Asia things can happen as in a dream, in fact, as in one's sleep, just as the Lord giveth to his beloved while they sleep." (Similarly, Spengler had frankly likened the history of Indian thought to the "movements of a sleeping person", p. 129, and Hegel had bluntly restricted it to some dialectic level of "mere dreaming", p. 46.) Illustrating this state of non-differentiating consciousness, Gebser resorts to a familiar comparison. He says that the age-old manner of considering the world as a cave into which one returns - in Europe till Plato - has largely survived in Asia. He finds this fact reflected in the Asian (especially Buddhist and Hindu) character: "The cave lies in the dark or in a twilight which never seeks the day; it knows no

---

(9) Cf. Gebser, Wandlung, p. 167: "Man is by no means the creator of the future; he is only a co-creator."

(10) Gebser, Asf., p. 74.

time, therefore no yesterday and no tomorrow, since within it the division of day from night has not yet happened."[11] This orientation towards "the magical world of the cave" is in accordance with another important cultural principle which Gebser discovers in the Indian mind, namely, its orientation towards the female, motherly pole of this world - or rather its numinous background - which balances the Occidental emphasis on some male-paternal world-pole.[12] In this connection it may be of interest to remember Spengler's indiscriminate morphological analogies of his assumed Greek and Indian nihilism; in Gebser's sense, we can now make a clear cultural and physiognomical distinction between the Indian ascetics of the magic cave and the mental asceticism exemplified by Diogenes as Spengler still sees him (p. 129).

(3) West and East complement each other

Gebser's method of understanding Eastern culture is, as we have seen, based on a careful differentiation between Oriental and Occidental consciousness. But the relationships between East and West, he stresses, should be understood as being of a complementary nature, not an opposite one. He classifies "opposition" as a concept, and "complement" as a constellation. He then warns that insistence on the typically European rational view of a non-existing East-West opposition "can entail the suicide of our culture or civilization".[13]

---

(11) Gebser, Asf., pp. 99-101. Spengler declares the "cave-like expressional magic space" to be the "primeval symbol of the Arabic culture" (indicating as his source of inspiration Frobenius, Paideuma, p. 106, who uses the term "cave-feeling"); cf. U.d.A., pp. 225, 236. Gebser, who agrees with Spengler that the "cave culture is symptomatic for Islam" (U.G., p. 189(20)), employs the cave symbol for his own historical conception of a magical consciousness structure.

(12) Gebser, Asf., pp. 104-105.

(13) Gebser, Asf., p. 111; also see pp. 123 (polarity), 158 (loss of the self), 172 (failure and chaos); and U.G., pp. 385-386: the "suicide of the Occident", prepared by the Renaissance, began

Gebser makes the basis of his hermeneutic quite clear. First sorting out what he wishes to avoid, he lets us know that "an exclusively rational thinking in opposites produces division, and in the long run it leads to death". (We do in fact feel reminded of Spengler's irrational but rationalistic strict monadological isolation which negated any meaningful communication between "us" and "them", thus leading to some form of relative death in his culture cycle.) "Hoever, if one moves consciously within the field of polar complements, the possibility of a harmonious wholeness appears." (Inasmuch as this may suggest a formal parallel to Gadamer, we must, with respect to his historical approach to tradition, distinguish between hermeneutic as a historical methodology and as a historiosophical methodology, as in Gebser or Spengler.)

East and West, as projected by Gebser, have different ways of getting into much the same problem. While the polar complementary mode of thinking which is today still common in Asia is usually not handled critically enough, therefore resulting in distorted views of reality, Western thought fails equally through its exclusively rational dualistic approach.(14) He feels that there is basically nothing wrong with either principle as such. But they may seem mutually incomprehensible and incompatible as long as each mode of thought is practised merely on the basis of its own original structure of consciousness while attempts are being made to pass judgement by illegitimately transferring and applying habitual standards to the opposite mode of thought. However, Gebser visulizes more than just some mutual appreciation within this complementary relationship. He aims at a universal mode of thinking and understanding. Unlike Schopenhauer, who somewhat nonchalently assumed that intelligent thought

---

sociologically in 1789, religiously during the Enlightenment (and culminating in the declaration that God was dead), politically with World War I, and was completed through existentialism.

(14) Gebser, Dualismus, p. 42: "The last attempt to establish the absolute power of dualism was Hegel's principle of 'thesis, antithesis and synthesis'."

(although not necessarily its expression) naturally followed the same principles everywhere, Gebser first makes a careful assessment of the roots of Asian thought.

(4) Common structures - different paths

Explaining Gebser's idea of a cultural polarity between East and West, we have shown how he perceives their present physiognomic differences. In asking why they differ he also looks into the the history of their self-identification. Pointing out the modern dangers of the widespread uncritical European belief in concrete, technological progress, he remarks that the meaning of progress can also imply a walking away from the origin. In addition the European mind also establishes a temporal distance. As a result it forgets the vital fact that "origin is continuous present" (compare Spengler's beginning phase of civilization, pp. 122, 135).[15] Gebser says that Europe and Asia share a distant past, but that they finally went different ways: Europe is not any more advanced than Asia, but certain structures, still alive in Asia, are forgotten, denied or suppressed in the West.

Indicating the year 500 B.C. as a formal point of spiritual culmination for the great cultures of that time, Gebser concentrates on two important periods, the one before that date and the one around it. During the latter one, also known as the "axial period", or Achsenzeit,[16] Asia and Europe, East and West, begin to go different ways. Around this time this magic-mythic world begins to disappear for the European mind, while Asia preserves it.[17] Gebser in asking

---

(15) Gebser, Asf., p. 127; U.G., pp. 305-306: a sucessful integration of origin and presence means freedom with regard to time.

(16) Jaspers (Ursprung, pp. 18-42), inspired by Hegel, impressed Gebser with his well-developed empirical picture of an Achsenzeit. "It marks the deepest cut in history. Man of the type we have lived with until today originated."

(17) Similarly, Husserl (Krisis, p. 329) suggests that Oriental philosophies are fundamentally different from Greek-European philosophy because "in their own context they are and remain mythical-practical".

us to turn our rational modern minds briefly to that ancient Greek myth telling of the princess Europa being carried off by Zeus who was in the form of a bull, suggests that such myths in fact meant reality for men before 500 B.C. He feels that this myth could have originated towards the end of the zodiacal period of taurus, the bull, thus pointing to the time around the fifth till the third millennium B.C. He describes the spiritual nature of the cultures of that era as magic, their sociological orientation as matriarchal. The following period, until the great separation begins, he calls mythic. Magic-mythic man did not yet treat the world as an object, since he was still embedded in it. His outlook was not yet ruled by rational, logical thought and imagination.(18) Instead he used dreamlike mythic ideas (see p. 149) which were not concepts. Gebser describes the basis of the magic-mythic kind of self-identification still prevailing in Asia in these words: "The fundamental structure of the magical, then, is the undifferentiated unity of all living being; the fundamental structure of the mythical is the mutually complementary polarity of the spiritual. Neither of these two fundamental structures puts things into conceptual opposition....Mythic "thinking" happens in episodes or pictorial ideas which follow rather flowing associations and which never have, like our thinking, a linear, aim-oriented character but return in a circular manner back into themselves." For him such ideas as the wheel of saṃsāra, the chain of births, reveal the need of undivided, polar harmony between heaven, earth and man.

Whether we like it or not, says Gebser, those ancient magic-mythic structures - he calls them pre-rational and irrational - also belong to Western culture; however, in Asia they have remained more prominent. A denial or rejection of these elements would jetison

---

(18) Gebser (Asf., p. 131) reverses Schopenhauer's and Kant's use of the German terms Vernunft, i.e. reason, and Verstand, i.e. intellect, which animals also have got: in Gebser's terminology Verstand is rational, analytical, and a later, post-mythical accessory to Vernunft. With subtle linguistic sensitivity he interprets Vernunft as something like a receptive understanding, an (inner) hearing (vernehmen).

our full human identity. This could happen through the kind of irrational physiognomical abstraction which underlies Spengler's rationalistic presentation,[19] or through the kind of rational positivistic reduction exposed by Husserl.[20] Gebser points to the deadlock situation which to him the "European crisis" seems to feature - and which he understands, more than Husserl, as a genuine "world crisis" - and he comments that "we cannot without punishment deny constituent elements of our past and our humanness".[21] Thus, he ties a warning into his explanation of why Asia and Europe differ so much today in their cultural outlooks. He assumes, as we have seen, that until the axial period Asia and Europe shared some magic-mythic fundamental consciousness structure. Asia, having largely retained this till today, has not yet awakened from its dreamlike feeling of cosmic unity - it does not set itself as subject against the world as object, or clearly see the self in terms of I and you. Europe, however, has in the meantime formed a mental-rational consciousness structure. Unfortunately, misled by its rationalist achievements, it has lost its sense for those more ancient structures in its own cultural nature, nor is it very willing to appreciate them as they exist in Asia. They do form part of our Western reality, and, as Gebser emphasizes, their appreciation - i.e. our cultural awareness - will be crucial for the future of man's conscious existence. According to Gebser, the present crisis of Europe is actually only part of a - very serious - general

---

(19) Gebser classifies Spengler's power-oriented thought as "predominantly magic" (U.G., p. 206), and "undermining" due to a one-sided biologistic approach (p. 94). Von Hartmann has already been criticized by Ziegler for his "questionable submission to the style of research of the biologistic sciences" (Hartm., p. 6).

(20) Husserl (Krisis, pp. 3, 10) sees a crisis of science in its positivistic reduction of the idea of science to a mere science of facts. He describes it as identical with the crisis of philosophy, which is the crisis of European mankind regarding the meaning of its "existence".

(21) Gebser, Asf., p. 133.

crisis of mankind. "What we experience today is not, perchance, merely a European crisis....It is a crisis of the world and humanity... which seems to be leading towards an event which from our point of view can only be described by the expression "global catastrophe"....This means either the end and death of our present earth and its population... or the realization and reality of the wholeness of origin and present; ...otherwise the prophets of doom would be right in the end."(22) As the structural essence of this crisis he visualizes a new consciousness mutation analogous to the one around 500 B.C., affecting all cultured mankind.(23)

Gebser's remarkable idea is that after two and a half millennia of separation the paths of Eastern and Western consciousness must meet and merge again. While in the axial period Europe made a leap

---

(22) Husserl's linear, but unpolar, perspective (Krisis, pp. 13-14) describes "philosophy (as) the historical movement of the revelation of the universal reason 'innate' in mankind....Only thereby could it be decided whether European mankind carries an absolute idea in itself rather than being a merely empirical anthropological type such as 'China' or 'India'". Husserl, like Spengler, identifying with his own culture, cannot see that India, in fact, is acultural, i.e., it asks different questions for its own philosophical purposes. He suggests (pp. 346-347) that the crisis, being "rooted in some erring rationalism" and wrongly externalized through "naturalism" and "objectivism" (Spengler!), could be met by his "transcendental phenomenological" approach, in which he starts from his own self while remaining a theoretical observer.

(23) In U.G., ch. 3, Gebser describes his idea of spiritual mutation from an original archaic state of consciousness through a magic, a mythic and a mental (rational) one towards an integral consciousness structure. He describes (Wandlung, p. 165) the principal indications for its possible attainment as: (1) the overcoming of the old time concept, (2) relativity, (3) cancellation of opposites or dualisms respectively, and (4) development by leaps implying acausality.

forward which, as it now seems, may have in some respects taken it too far, the Asian part of the mutation was not followed through. He illustrates the main changes of thought, mysterious as they may appear, by a historical sketch.(24) With the introduction of patriarchy (at the beginning of the second millennium B.C.) man-made laws begin to challenge fate. Then Zarathustra (born 797 B.C.) splits the polarity of the world by proclaiming the dualistic principles of good and bad. Homer (c. 800 B.C.) demonstrates through his epic continuity that time has a yesterday, today and tomorrow, that it is an aim-oriented process and not an eternal return; besides this, his Odysseus utters the first "I am" (εἶμι Ὀδυσσεύς) in Western culture, i.e., the opening statement to Western thought as it were.(25) Around 500 B.C. the mental break-through happens simultaneously in Greece and in India (and China). A formal starting point for European philosophy is provided by Thales of Miletus (642 B.C.) using conceptual thought instead of mythic forms. In Greece the actor Thespis introduces a personal dialogue. In India the Buddha, presumably, introduces the dialogue as a form of teaching: the "I and you" emerges (compare p. 231).(26) He also makes first philosophical (besides patriarchal) moves, although without dropping the mythical element. Parmenides (c. 540 B.C.), although he still sees no becoming and no dissolution but only the present, excludes non-being from existence, and postulates that thinking is being. In India, the Bhagavadgītā, telling of Krsna's efforts in helping Arjuna to fight his kin, presents a first attempt to rouse the ego from its group identity.(27) In the West, Socrates (469 B.C.) introduces concept

---

(24) Gebser, Asf., pp. 134-141, 152-155.

(25) Gebser, U.G., p. 83; Mensch, pp. 23, 123.

(26) Bareau (Biogr.II.1, p. 190) is also aware of the cultural parallel of this form of dialogue "du type de l'interrogation socratique si chère aux ouvrages canoniques".

(27) Gebser (U.G., pp. 83-95) interprets the phenomenon of anger, appearing simultaneously in both the Iliad and the Bhagavadgītā, as

description, teaches through dialogue, and seeks truth and virtue through thinking (as opposed to the merely mythic seeing). Plato (472 B.C.), recording Socrates, creates the foundations of Western aim-oriented, consequent thought, thus finally overcoming the circular mythic form of thought. Gebser observes that this general break-through to the mental form of consciousness was much less radical in India. In those two centuries of the axial period the paths of Asia and Europe separated. As he points out, immediately after Plato came Aristotle who created the foundations for the change from the mental to the purely rational approach in Western thinking. In India, however, not until the eighth century A.D. did Śaṅkara follow, vainly trying to establish a mental-logical orientation in Hinduism (compare Chapter Eight). The decisive split between Eastern and Western thought finally occurred when, from the Renaissance onward, in Europe the mental principle was exaggerated into the rational, and when the possibility of some slow and harmonious maturation was rejected in favour of will-inspired, aim-oriented progress. While Europe thus partially determined its own fate, in Asia fate itself remained dominant. Besides the Brahmanic patriarchal forms, older matriarchal ones also survived. The circular nature of events was not changed by linear personal action, and thought maintained its circular, reiterant character, while in Europe linear logical, causal thought was developed on the basis of conceptual definitions and distinctions.

To us, this separation would indicate that Indian terminology cannot reflect the same principles of conceptual thought as in Europe. But Gebser, in looking at the important problem of self-identification and individuality, disregards this crucial fact. When he finds that in Asia kinship identity prevailed greatly over the individual "ego"-identity, he unfortunately implies some universal category of individuality (which shall concern us below). Asia's greater nearness

---

a symptom of a new consciousness orientation towards clan-free individualism and ego-strength. Anger (μῆνιν or krodha) indicates to him the beginning of intentional, oriented "mental" thinking, i.e., not retrospective, blind, but thinking anger (cf. our p. 210).

to cosmic harmony helped it to preserve a kind of wisdom which in the course of Europe's change was largely turned into (intellectual) knowledge, where, according to Gebser, it would have become lost entirely if it had not been for the influence of Christianity, which helped to complete the development of the "you" in European thought. In the further development Asia and Europe responded to different consciousness structures. This is why, in Gebser's view, they do not today behave or think alike. But he observes new efforts throughout the East in preparation of a decisive "leap ahead"(28) by which Asia could overcome its old tendency to disclaim or undo life by re-submerging in the presumed time-ocean, in other words, to relapse into irrationality. Instead, it would seem that Asia is finally securing the same form of consciousness as has been prevailing in Europe. But not only that. Since the West itself is at present undergoing a new consciousness mutation (reflected by the mentioned European cultural crisis), Asia would have to make a double leap if their hitherto separated paths of consciousness were to meet again. What Gebser sees is this: Asia catches up with Europe and together with it reaches what he calls the arational-integral level of consciousness.(29) In this new over-awake state, as he visualizes it, human understanding rises above the purely rational level and all the previous stages of its origin by not only becoming fully aware of them but also integrating them into this new form of consciousness - one in which man is aware of his complete consciousness and its origin.(30)

(28) In Asf., p. 165, he refers to Sri Aurobindo: "In one enormous leap, within a few decades, he made up for those five hundred years which we have lived through since the Renaissance, which have shaped us and which bestowed upon us the detour necessary for Europe via the temporary exclusivism of the rational."

(29) Jünger (Weltstaat, pp. 38, 40) similarly, sets his hope in a new type of human being who "combines knowledgeable astuteness with divination", suggesting that various (Spenglerian and other) cultural turning points may be coinciding; but according to Gebser, he only "clings to some desperately heroic attitude" (U.G., p. 305).

(30) Gebser considers as superseded, and even misleading, the dualistic,

(5) Gebser's consciousness awareness and his integral hermeneutic

Gebser's conception of man's increased self-awareness is based on his integral view of Europe and the East, with much emphasis on India; this view in turn reflects his personal awareness of culture as the principal medium through which human consciousness finds its expression (integral also with regard to the transposition of the irrational into the arational). The successful reunion of the Occidental and the Asian paths, or the "great encounter" as Gebser calls it, would depend on our Western understanding of the nature of Eastern thought, i.e. on an adequate hermeneutic. There remain the magic-mythic forces which hamper Asia's adoption of Western rational thought. On the other hand, any further exclusive continuation of this rational approach which is dominant in the West at present "must necessarily lead to the West's loss of its self".(31) Gebser assures us that the world needs the "great encounter", but neither on the basis of imposing exclusively Western methods on Asia nor through becoming absorbed(32) by Asian irrational forces (compare A. Bharati's hermeneutic problem of connecting India and the West on the basis of his private mysticism, Chapter Six).

Gebser describes his idea of the "great encounter" as a synthesis beyond and above a merely irrational or merely rational level, i.e. he aims at some sort of meta-level. We could say that this Gebserian synthesis of East and West should - while integrating all previous consciousness structures - lead to the above-mentioned arational level of consciousness, which at first sight may resemble a meta-level. Gebser emphasizes that this arational approach should efficiently help to correct the aberrations of Asia's irrational ways

---

notion of the unconscious, as it was developed by von Hartmann, and postulates four intensity levels of consciousness (Wandlung, p. 131; U.G., pp. 224; 121, 144, 156, 315).

(31) Gebser, Asf., p. 158.

(32) Such a pursuit would strike Gebser as a betrayal of the Western consciousness achievement.

without, however, eradicating the irrational principle as such. This is of great importance to Gebser who feels that Asia, without accepting its own irrational and pre-rational fundamentals, could never master the mental-rational principle but would instead drift into a merely rational stream. He observes a similar and perhaps even more precarious situation in the West due to an excessively rationalistic (i.e. "escapist") mode of thought which he considers essentially exhausted, or deficient, and no longer life sustaining.(33) At this stage mere reforms would seem futile to him; only the achievement of a new fearless integral approach of thinking which is also capable of accepting the appearance of an arational element in thought could guarantee a vital reorientation in Eastern and Western thought alike.(34) Gebser believes that this arational-integral consciousness is an indispensable prerequisite for the "great encounter" which will decisively determine the future existence of mankind (and which at the time of his writing he envisages as still possible within this century). Both East and West could recuperate from aberration and crisis and develop a viable new mode of thought, provided they find ways to sort out and handle clearly the older structures of their actual potentials. In this regard Schopenhauer or von Hartmann would only represent an inadequate beginning. Moreover, from Gebser's point of view, Spengler's quasi-magic vision of a merely retrospective civilized consciousness form mirrored by final non-cultural and purely rational productions is a genuine source of fear and depression.(35)

---

(33) Gebser, Asf., p. 160; U.G., p. 87: in the case of the European culture we are now witnessing "the deficiency phase, probably the final phase as regards the exclusive validity of the mental-rational structure".

(34) Gebser, Asf., pp. 100, 166; U.G., pp. 318, 320: our modern rationality ignores the usual uselessness of "reforms, revigorizations and the like".

(35) Berdyaev (Hist., p. 222) develops a consciously acultural alternative to Spengler by suggesting a religious (rather than a Gebserian cultural arational) integration: "Civilization is not

Gebser, who as a thinker draws his material from his cultural observations, also proves to have a natural awareness of the practical implications of his hermeneutic, as we may notice from his special distinction between doing (machen) and influencing (wirken). He feels that doing in a Faustian manner, as in Spengler's West, can only result in mere power and only for a limited time. Lasting reality, however, results from a continual exchange of mutual influences. He literally calls this process "the life sustaining change".(36) In a manner which reminds us of his contemporary Gadamer, Gebser uses his own language style as a direct hermeneutic device to demonstrate his idea that reality (like Gadamer's meaning) emerges into visibility as a result of the mutual influence between the seer and the seen. His style of writing indicates his high sensitivity towards mutual influence and correspondence between the various conceptual manifestations of thought, within the same culture as well as cross-culturally. In addition, his analysis of thought proves his fundamental culture awareness. Practically, his exceptional, "para-poetic" word formations and syntax provide a dialectic technique through which he may hope to raise his readers' hermeneutic awareness and alertness. His word formations suggest concept origins, while through his syntax he offers his own rhythm of thought to his readers. This rhythm follows his fundamental conception of cultural polarity (compare Gadamer's movement between subject and object).

As we have shown in the case of India and Europe, Gebser's hermeneutic follows two coordinates. His principle orientation could be looked upon as following a vertical coordinate. This vertical orientation results from his two separate, but analogous, diachronic

---

the only possible passage from culture with its tragic antithesis to 'life' and its transfiguration. There is also a path of religious transfiguration of life and the fulfilment of true being. We can establish four periods or states in man's historical destiny: barbarism, culture, civilization and religious transformation....they can co-exist; they represent, in fact, the different predispositions of the human spirit."

(36) Gebser, Asf., p. 161.

studies of these two paths of culture consciousness. On this basis he establishes a horizontal, synchronic view ranging between an Eastern and a Western culture pole. It is this view which gathers all traceable cultural consciousness structures in an attempt to expose them as the fundamentals for the new nascent arational level of consciousness, which would naturally include a fourfold integral culture awareness.(37) This means that this new arational-integral consciousness would essentially include a new hermeneutic consciousness. From Schopenhauer to Gadamer we can observe distinct stages which all manifest moves in the direction indicated by Gebser. But of these only Gebser himself reasons with a full view towards some meta-level of thought.

Unlike Schopenhauer, Gebser demonstrates a technically universal culture awareness. Nevertheless, his expositions parallel to some extent Schopenhauer's claim regarding the world as imagination. In Schopenhauer, our idea of the world follows our imagination which - as he may have taken for granted - in turn is nourished by culture, our culture (or, at least, his culture). For Gebser the world, reality, is also a product of our culture-specific and consciousness-specific manner of seeing. That is, seeing culture is also making culture. While Schopenhauer's pessimism is still <u>rigidly</u> connected with his philosophical ethnocentrism, Gebser is only a pessimist inasmuch as pessimism remains as an <u>integral</u> possibility within his own conscious cultural outlook. Gebser treats human consciousness as a quality which naturally undergoes regular change; only from a non-relative, absolute point of view would this consciousness appear unchanging but boundless. Gebser's integral view of development makes isolated, individual reformative change redundant. In fact, he is quite opposed to it, as we saw. Schopenhauer's stationary individualistic position, on the other hand, reforms through his pessimistic doctrine which propounds that all consciousness ought to

---

(37) The described consciousness levels are: (1) archaic-original, (2) magic-pre-rational, (3) mythic-irrational, (4) mental-rational, (5) integral-arational (cf. <u>U.G.</u>, pp. 127, 164).

undergo the radical change of negation (a change which he admits may well result in some "boundless" undefinable state; see pp. 58-59).

Gebser's thought, like Spengler's, takes root in his physiognomical cultural observations. Spengler's ingenious creation of a dramatic vitalistic view of culture, as we saw, only leaves room for meaningful consciousness within the boundaries of his finite culture structures; beyond these boundaries consciousness becomes worthless. Gebser overcomes this form of self-limitation. He sees and accepts the positive and negative cultural potentials as part of a consciousness polarity through which man participates in a universal being-reality.(38) Gebser communicates his awareness by an approach to cultural interpretation which reminds us of that of Gadamer. Apart from their common preference for a rhythmic mode of expression, both authors develop their ideas of seeing reality (which for Gebser implies being) similarly in terms of a developing movement, as in Gadamer, or a process of influencing change, as in Gebser. The latter reveals a mystical component of his thought in connection with his hermeneutic by adding that through integrating our personal influence in the described manner we become a co-creator of that reality of being which transcends the visible world. With a view to a practical and spiritual appreciation and understanding of the Eastern character he writes: "Since the influencing (das Wirken) can only be consummated through the entire reality (die ganze Wirklichkeit) of the human being, which also includes his participation in the universal invisible reality, it follows that we might well be capable of exerting an influence on what is not there yet, hence on what has not happened yet, as it rests in the invisible reality, in which we participate as much as in the visible one."(39) In order to demonstrate his new consciousness approach Gebser uses two guiding principles: (1) that which is hidden (latency) is the demonstrable present aspect (presence) of the future; (2) that which

---

(38) Ontologically, this participation in cosmic wholeness includes "so-called non-being"; psychologically, the modern mystic "sinks no longer back into a mystical extinction of the ego" (Mensch, p. 13).

(39) Gebser, Asf., p. 161.

shines through (the diaphanous, or transparency) is the form of appearance (epiphany) of the spiritual. The diaphanous equals none of the traditional ephemeral mental-rational concepts such as "essence", "existence" etc. Rather, he considers it the testimony for the new mutation.(40)

Gebser feels that there is some great coherence and unity in all those seeming opposites and contradictions which pervade the various forms of human consciousness. His description of man's possible participation in an invisible reality combines an inductive culturological with a speculative metaphysical view. Following a somewhat mystical inner certainty he integrates the geographical and the historical, i.e. the spatial and the temporal, aspects of culture. He exposes them as being the conditions which, by modifying man's awareness of himself, have also restricted it so far. Gebser's inter-cultural hermeneutic principles also work for his intra-cultural harmonization. Thus, the negative sides of life, even death, becomes integrated with their positive polar complements. Reminding us of Schopenhauer's respect for the seemingly fragmentary but direct insights of the ancient Indians (pp. 49, 72), Gebser, too, believes that this knowledge, which we have to work out stepwise in accordance with our mental-rational or, perhaps, arational mode of thinking, must have been directly accessible to ancient irrational polar thought. He finds this confirmed by a line from the Sanatsujāta-Parvan which says that death consists in the self's wrong manner of seeing and also that death is part of our body, i.e. part of life.(41) This also means that man's identity does not have to end where he happens to die. Gebser sees

---

(40) Gebser, U.G., pp. 10-11, 150.

(41) Gebser (U.G., p. 247(86)) quotes after Deussen, Mahābhāratam (Sanat.-Par.) 5.41.16, "death is the inner soul afflicted by delusion; that indeed is death which as such lives in your body". He finds (pp. 231-232) this "death pole" of the soul explicitly described in connection with the Upanisadic pitryāna, or, where Yājñavalkya is asked by the son of Rtabhāga what happens after one's manas (mind) has gone to the moon (after Deussen, S.Ups., Brh. 3.2.13; cf. our pp. 200-201).

birth and death as the two equivalent ends or poles of life which itself is only the visible side of an overall reality.(42) In his opinion it is simply due to our habitual Western manner of seeing this world as perspectively drawn out in some space-time dimensions that we feel separated from the invisible side, or even ignore it.(43) But culturally this condition is not only regionally but also temporally restricted. While, according to Gebser, traditional Indian thought reflects a rather undifferentiated type of consciousness (the tendency to return into the time-ocean), European thought (and, of late, also Indian thought) is heading for a new comprehensive form of self-awareness which takes distinctive stages of cultural and philosophical self-identification into account.

Looking back at Schopenhauer's "nirvana", which appeared to him as the only possible answer to the irreconcilable incongruities of this world in terms of constituting the complete and only "way out", we remember his distinct segregation of life into an undesirable painful existence and a free relative non-existence. The world as such, as he held in his pessimism, was essentially and undeniably bad. For Gebser

---

(42) A rational, hence "deficient", ontological parallel may be found in Fichte who, denying the existence of any "pure death", describes it as one constituent of an illusion based on a (dualistically conceived) mixture of life and death (Sel., pp. 14, 16).

(43) Gebser (Wandlung, p. 86) elaborates that from a modern point of view, including that of biology, dying and death are no longer to be considered as catastrophical but as integral parts of life. "Death is not something that happens to us, but something living that grows in us." His tenet that "death participates in life" (pp. 148-149) reverses and absorbes Schopenhauer's perspective according to which death is the moving force behind philosophy and life a prevented form of dying. He announces (pp. 37, 81) that the old duality between soul and matter, between idealism and materialism has become obsolete, likewise the old view of temporal continuity. Nature does jump. (P. 43:) The position of formerly fixed points in space having become relative, we should see things from the aspect of an aperspective, space-time-free totality.

"nirvana" is only a cultural modification of a special aspect of being-reality, and by no means some nothingness outside of the world. As regards the negative side of life, he explains it simply as the "polar" inseparable part of the whole. Obviously he sees no need or justification for a total metaphysical pessimism. The common worries about life and death should be considered trivial and natural, and allow, at most, for some polar existential pessimism. Gebser, who feels personally safe in his own "post-metaphysical" conception of life, has no need to negate. He can only worry as to whether or not a representative portion of mankind will in good time perceive the world in a manner equivalent to his own answer, which is presented in his arational-integral mode of viewing. He would be concerned about, if anything, the actual potential of European thought for escaping from the danger of being squashed by the present preponderance of purely rational approaches to cultural change. In other words, he leaves room for pessimism <u>about</u> man's metaphysical potential.(44)

Schopenhauer and our other metaphysical philosophers, likewise Spengler, our other cultural thinker, all draw a line between the essence of this world as they see it and some necessary negation, abandonment or loss of it. The manner in which they draw this line defines their pessimism. Gebser, too, draws a dividing line which, however, cuts right across those other lines. Denying the possibility of any such radical division, he simply considers such pessimistic outlooks as mere cultural constituents in the <u>formation</u> of the new arational-integral level of consciousness. His dividing line concerns

---

(44) Gebser (<u>Mensch</u>, pp. 80-81) predicts for the near future a "wave" of destructive forces causing confusion and disorder as a cultural response to the prevailing order which has become obsolete and therefore wrong. The reception of the "integral" minds is decisive. (Pp. 12, 27-29:) Unafflicted by the rationalistic ego-hypertrophy, this new type of consciousness draws on the potentials of the ego-less, the we-oriented, the ego-oriented and the new ego-free stages. In the case of failure, "the world and mankind will be doomed to die". (Also see <u>Wandlung</u>, p. 12; <u>U.G.</u>, pp. 547-548, 555.)

the direction of the possible path of this formation, i.e., the outcome of the aforementioned new consciousness mutation. In his opinion mankind only has two choices in this regard: either a successful mutation which would entail an integrated potential for a superior treatment of all the traditional metaphysical questions, or failure.(45) On the practical side this would be the failure to attain a new, possible, and practically imperative level of cultural harmony. His admittance of this possibility of failure, a danger which he takes very seriously, can perhaps be described as conditional cultural pessimism, in which India and the East play a decisive complementary role for the West.(46)

Gebser is the only one of our thinkers who does not superimpose a rigorously European scheme of philosophical and cultural values on India. Instead, he develops a hermeneutic which derives meaning from some critical movement of thought between East and West. In addition he exposes as absolutely crucial some form of meta-level which is his arational-integral level of consciousness on which Western and Eastern thought and culture enjoy adequate appreciation as compatible constituents of a universal mode of thought.(47)

---

(45) Gebser (U.G., pp. 149, 155) describes what could be called the metaphysical core of his cultural observations in terms of a "presence of origin" (Ursprungsgegenwart), i.e. the principle which also forms - and judges - each single individual. Any unbalancing and dissolving rational or irrational attempts would bestow onto the expected mutational leap the danger of an ego-loss, annihilation or vanishing (Untergang). "However, we may presume that the leap will only be risked by those who are capable of it; or rather, only within them will it risk itself."

(46) The integration of mankind, towards which we can work, would depend on whether we succeed in understanding and controlling the powers of chaos, or not. "The consequences of such a failure on our side are so dreadfully plain and clear that no comment is required" (Asf., p. 172).

(47) Gebser illustrates the principles of his hermeneutic very lucidly in his essay Der grammatische Spiegel (The Grammatical Mirror). The

(6) Metaphysical pessimism: a cultural epiphenomenon

Gebser represents a significant step towards understanding metaphysical pessimism as a typical epiphenomenon of European culture, and not as a direct reflection of consciousness. He treats the pessimistic German search for cultural or metaphysical identity as a symptom of the deficiency phase of mental-rational thought. For him, non-deficient understanding means attuning oneself and thus participating in being-reality. This process is consummated hermeneutically on the basis of a naturally existing interrelation as it can be found in any (cultural) subject-object relation or polar relation. Some sort of cosmic physiognomical rhythm and tact has already been encountered in Spengler (p. 126) who, however, expresses it in terms of his strictly European, stationary kind of identity; i.e., his monadological culture awareness aspires to no hermeneutic cultural integration. Spengler's confinement to some rigidly structured culture consciousness also precludes any individual metaphysical upward movement, unlike Gebser's approach to being-reality. Reminding us of Schopenhauer, our proto-pessimist, Spengler's essential change aims at some end, death, or decline, if not annihilation.

In connection with this type of metaphysical immobility or confinement Gebser looks at the important role of fear: the fear of death, the fear of the unknown and the resulting mental anguish (compare German Angst, fear; Latin angustiae, tightness).[48] Gebser

---

physiognomic expression of grammar serves him as a mirror which can turn the act of viewing into a direct answer (pp. 12, 46). The new consciousness structure, as he observes very astutely, is foreshadowed by change in language. The anthropocentric perspective melts away and man acquires an "aperspective" view, that is, space and time unite (pp. 22-25).

[48] Cf. our pp. 34(47); 133, Weltangst; in an autobiographical remark (very similar to that of Spengler, our p. 139(56)), Gebser describes how, at the age of twelve, he also suffers from oppressive visions and dreams in which he feels defenselessly exposed to a boundless nightly sky which penetrates into his bedroom, tying him

assures us that for the European mind true understanding (which includes his cultural implications of the awareness process) prevents this fear. In the case of India, where we are to expect a complementary situation, Gebser notices a natural lack of any fear of death, or fear of the unknown, of the kind which generally features the Western consciousness (p. 146).[49] If we go along with Gebser's idea of the time-ocean, the different Indian ego-consciousness and the different role of fate, then it follows that no genuine individual pessimism can accrue, neither existentially nor metaphysically, from Indian thought. On the whole, India has retained its irrational, direct, spontaneous principle of understanding, although the very forces of this mode of thought have also deferred its long due change of consciousness. On the other hand, the practical dangers of not being able or not wanting to understand, and the resulting fragmentation of thought, are largely a corollary of Western rationality. Hence Gebser's hermeneutic worry, which we have interpreted in terms of a conditional hermeneutic pessimism.

From Schopenhauer onward, we have found that man participates, through his intellect, in what his will and imagination displays to him

---

down in utmost "anguish, fear and oppression", ready to obliterate him (Mensch, pp. 93-94). Also see Verfall, pp. 133-136: on the condition of fear and the impulse of fright. Also see U.G., pp. 148-149, 148(21-23); 159: his explanation that fear (including the phantasies of doom, death and decline) always accompanies and indicates (a) the exhaustion of the cultural potential of a given consciousness structure, i.e., its deficiency phase, and (b) the accumulation of new forces - hence pressure and anguish - which culminates in some break-through to a new mutation. He denies the apparent cyclical element in his view of cultural exhaustion by arguing that the change is mutational, not evolutional, i.e. simply a "transposition", not some "rise or decline".

(49) Schubart (Europa, pp. 103, 233) describes the typical European, foremost the German, as a metaphysical pessimist moved by a primeval fear and worry about the world as chaos. "In the German, primeval fear has reached a depth and force as nowhere else."

as reality. But while Schopenhauer liberates from (his) reality through negation, Gebser wants to liberate from fear and negation through some moving, influencing, integrating participation in a new human identity.(50) Schopenhauer's negation consists in the consummation of the understanding of a wrongly desired and actually undesirable world; all so-called happiness is chimerical for him. Gebser's manner of understanding through harmonious participation appears to be ethically neutral, since for him suffering, and even death, marks only one side of the totality of existence and should, in a properly balanced consciousness, be no less chimerical than happiness. For Schopenhauer man is the victim of a blind will (a condition of which he can become metaphysically aware), whereas for Gebser man's changing identity reflects his cultural level of consciousness (which at this point in history ought to be controlled by some integrating process of culture awareness). While Schopenhauer's knowledge or understanding relies on a rigid, psychologically undifferentiating culture reaction, Gebser's hermeneutic assumes that an understanding of the ever existing being-reality (including one's subject-object relation with one's

---

(50) In Gebser's terminology, the break-through from the essentially pre-Platonic mythic-polar form of seeing to a mental-directed mode of thinking also implies that Western thought no longer encircles any content, but points or leads into some "openness"; having reached its deficient, i.e. predominantly rational, phase, it necessarily reveals only "emptiness". We have seen that the change since Schopenhauer, who still prefers a circular form of description (our p. 49) for his rational approach of thought, is characterized by an increasingly rational unilinear directedness in von Hartmann's and Mainländer's presentations (cf. U.G., p. 269). Gebser observes that Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and von Hartmann touch increasingly upon the problem of the older unconscious structures underlying our Western self-awareness (Wandlung, pp. 23, 131). He uses Weininger (cf. our p. 61(49)) to explain how the break-through to some new cultural awareness form (here: the man-woman integration) may frequently first require a reduction to an extremely negative (deficient) aspect of a certain representative phenomenon (pp. 136-137).

own personality, or India, or the world) may continually be acquired through moving participation. In the West, this process has had to rely so far on a sufficient balance of the mental-rational, and in India, on a naturally more harmoneous, but still mainly irrational form of consciousness. He feels that the present cultural world crisis could be overcome if the arational-integral consciousness could be achieved by enough influential minds; otherwise man might be facing a total cultural world catastrophe, which would simply be a move back toward cosmic chaos.(51) The essential change from Schopenhauer to Gebser is that Gebser moves man's general and categorical existential predicament from the metaphysical to the cultural level where he balances it axiologically. After all, according to Gebser's culture-oriented outlook on consciousness, both Schopenhauer's "nirvana" and the Buddhist conception of nirvāna reflect cultural modes of thought, furthermore, inasmuch as man can relate himself to them (i.e., participate), they form parts of his assumed reality. In this manner, Gebser - formally reversing Schopenhauer - reduces metaphysical pessimism to cultural pessimism, which in turn he allots a relative position marking the deficiency level; in brief, he integrates it in his arational view.

The very problem of identity has a pessimistic potential. The search for an identity may indicate its loss, or a need for it. Gebser, who observes a spreading feeling of rationalistic material senselessness in life, infers from the fact that the very question of sense is being asked today that the actual sense has become questionable.(52) This observation can be applied to identity. The search for self-identity. The search for self-identity - mediated through some cultural identity - requires some form of culture awareness or culture response which, in accordance with Gebser's view of the West, is connected with a mental

---

(51) Neumann (Ethik, p. 48) warns that psychologically this move would be furthered by a split, on the collective level, into a consciousness determined ethical-value world and a suppressed un-value world of the unconscious.

(52) Gebser, U.G., pp. 147-148.

rational consciousness structure. For him the self-destructive nature of the rational (i.e. deficient) level of thought isolates and collectivizes and thereby forces the mind into some imprisonment to which it responds with due pessimism.(53) Gebser does not suffer from this world as vehemently as does Spengler, or Schopenhauer. He is concerned, and he worries. Through his vision of some crucial process of imminent change he tries to give man a harmonious, non-fractured identity on the basis of both a cultural consciousness awareness and a conceptual understanding of the cultural conditions of the entire historical process of change.(54) In other words, man's awareness is not only a qualifying but also a selective constituent of his (sought-for) identity.

Gebser's observations testify to a high physiognomical culture awareness. However his philosophical culture awareness, remaining dominated by the Greco-European tradition, throws more light on his own relationship with German thought than on the actual fundamentals of Indian thought. Some essential features of Indian thought elude him; his notions of an ego development in connection with an Indian time-ocean and nirvāna thrive along cultural parallels which do not originate from a category of individuality common to German and Indian thought. Gebser may perhaps psycho-sociologically be entitled to assume something like a time-ocean. However, he cannot explain the Buddhist concept of nirvāna in terms of a dissolution or return of an individual who is featured by a certain ego-form or identifiable consciousness structure, because in the concept tradition of nirvāna, i.e. in its only meaningful context, no such consciousness

(53) Schubart (Europa, pp. 30-31): "Cultural fatigue and satiety become apparent....The pessimistic culture philosophers appear, in a long line which reaches from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to Spengler and Klages." The turning-point, he adds, is marked by Schopenhauer introducing sceptical culture criticism "which seeks for complementary values in India"; von Hartmann, Deussen and others followed him on this path.

(54) Gebser (U.G., p. 562): "What I have tried here is to contribute to the clarification of a complex situation the solution of which is going to happen today or tomorrow."

structure or category was ever developed. When Gebser says that the Indian has no ego, this essentially only means (although unfortunately, he does not clearly see this himself) that Indian thought has no Gebserian category of individuality. (Here, from the point of view of comparative philosophy, his physiognomical observations lack an essential connecting point.) Gebser's hermeneutic is based on the mistaken assumption that his category of individuality or self-identity according to systematically changing ego-structures could be directly applied to such Indian traditions as Buddhism, Vedānta or Yoga.(55) However, such a category was never developed in Indian thought.

The problem of the unconscious, and therefore uncontrolled, prejudice may be further elucidated if, to use a familiar concept, we look again at Schopenhauer's will which functions axiologically with regard to other things and which is his most universal category. In India, too, will is always there and around, but in some subtle manner. Gebser, in comparison, is distinctly nearer to Schopenhauer than to India. Schopenhauer treated, perhaps involuntarily, his concept of will as a primary category (officially he accepts only causality). Similarly, Gebser's strictly mental phenomenon of will, analogous to its superior arational counterpart, the diaphanous,(56) functions as one of his physiognomic measuring criteria inasmuch as it expresses or reflects a certain level of consciousness in accordance with his category of individuality. In India "will" is only implied; but a central orientation point, in terms of a primary impulse, may be provided by the mystical experience. Since in Indian thought understanding requires a connection with this primary impulse, we may tentatively say that, in order to come about, it has to be "willed". Gebser's pursuit implies the assumption that the primary impulse of the Indian and Western thought traditions (which he attempts to link at various points of interest)

---

(55) The correspondence which Feuerstein (Essence, p. 20) sees between Gebser's four consciousness phases and the four Indian yugas is formally acceptable, as long as we remain hermeneutically aware that Yoga recognizes no true individuality. Cf. Gupta, Yugas and Kalpas.

(56) Gebser, U.G., pp. 165, 318.

should be identical or of the same nature, for which we have no evidence. Such an assumption could be described as an unconscious hermeneutic prejudice (as opposed to Gadamer's conscious hermeneutic prejudice). Gebser is prejudiced in assuming that a primary category of individuality has evolved not only in Europe and Greece, but also in ancient India. However, only in Greece and Europe a thinking individual may seek his self-identity on the basis that "thinking is being". In India thinking is simply there with or without man's active participation and regardless of the written or oral book (i.e., the "core event" precedes all further developments). In Europe a text means essentially the same as a book; in India a "text" is another manifestation of thinking: a "willed" understanding. This is of fundamental hermeneutic significance (also see p. 239). The text is thinking which through the use of the latent "will", or some neutral volitional principle, may be actualized or linked with the mind, thus resulting in understanding.

Gebser uses his carefully observed psycho-sociological consciousness levels in order to calibrate his category of individuality. Unfortunately, its axiological application to such Indian concepts as nirvāna or saṃsāra amounts strictly speaking to a cultural annexation of India by the West - which is exactly what Gebser wants to avoid! Despite his high culture awareness the intended culturological integration of India into his world-outlook represents, from a meta-philosophical point of view, part of his personal reaction to his own cultural background: his subtle doubt or worry with regard to a change in man's self-identity cannot be transferred or applied to Indian thought.

(7) From Schopenhauer to Gebser

The period from Schopenhauer's philosophical début till Gebser's death comprises the history of a short series of philosophical beliefs in change revolving in each individual case around a search for metaphysical identity which we have come to understand as a distinct expression of pessimism. Before we enter the Indian part of our study, we wish to briefly recapitulate the essential steps which have allowed us to assess the philosophical principles of pessimism.

Schopenhauer metaphysically redefines the individual in terms of suffering. He derives the meaning of this suffering on an anthropological-ethical level from his characterological approach to culture. Implicitly with his pessimistic metaphysical impulse he passes his cultural reaction on to his followers. They perpetuate the impulse in accordance with their own culturally induced metaphysical views, but without reaching Schopenhauer's individual visionary strength.

Our historiosophical thinkers, Spengler and Gebser, treat metaphysical pessimism as a cultural phenomenon. Approaching the problem of human identity culturologically, Spengler in pursuit of one ingenious thought, Gebser with detailed intuition and accuracy, they display their own pessimistic potentials on the level of historical pessimism. Unlike the Schopenhauer group, they indicate a principal awareness of the cultural influence on thought, but not one of our thinkers is clearly aware that a personal reaction to culture is fundamental to both metaphysical pessimism and historical pessimism (which contains the question of metaphysical identity only in a latent form).

The (metaphysical) philosopher, as compared to the (cultural) thinker, develops a more personalistic attitude in his philosophizing. His personal inner need, and search, for a change in philosophical consciousness requires, despite seeing himself as a member of society, a philosophically distant, socially alienated attitude to man (which we have already observed in Socrates). Stimulated by culture, our philosophers and thinkers are willy-nilly culture critics. They are typical for their period inasmuch as they, consciously or unconsciously, express the need to overcome their own culture. They consider European culture as bad, without being fully aware of their own position in it, i.e., without being able to see from within how their own culture has affected their thinking.

Once we have appreciated this philosophical predicament of our metaphysicians, we can recognize a significant psychological and methodological principle behind India's "mysterious" Romantic power of attraction: India beckoned as an external position which would afford

the necessary distance from European culture (particularly obvious in the metaphysical function of Mainländer's India). Thus Indian thought becomes part of that symptom of pessimism which consists in searching for (metaphysical) identity, beginning with Schopenhauer's personalistic culture reaction. When we look at our cultural thinkers, we notice that these are not so provoked by the individual (although Gebser worries more about the individual than Spengler). As their predominantly cultural approach to identity shows, they are less personalistic and are socially as well as philosophically less alienated than our metaphysical pessimists. India serves Spengler and Gebser as a culturological reflector and intensifier of their historiosophically pursued self-image (as a cultural coordinater or an integrator, respectively). Essentially, they do not methodologically require India as a metaphysical support. Spengler uses Indian concepts as culturological illustrations. Gebser includes India in his psycho-culturological description of an integral consciousness. Since on this level philosophy has made way for some diaphanous mode of seeing, he possesses no noteworthy metaphysical substructure for the ontology of his ego-free strate of being-reality. But through his positive arational transformation of thought he avoids the type of metaphysical embarrassment in which Spengler finds himself upon trying, in the wake of Nietzsche, to dismiss or reform philosophy culturologically. It is interesting to note that it is along the narrow personalistic track which runs through Gebser's thought where he clashes hermeneutically with Indian thought, ignoring that his identity category of individuality is not applicable to Indian conditions. This particular weak spot in his culture awareness indicates the nature of his principal error which lets him wrongly include India into his worry an essentially European form of identity.

From Schopenhauer's interest in self-negation to Gebser's rejection of self-negation we observe various changes of culture awareness. Schopenhauer (in contrast to Hegel and Nietzsche) is predominantly ahistorical; von Hartmann, Mainländer and Deussen are historical in their approach. But all are unaware of both the

traditional and the cultural character of their own philosophies. Similarly, they neither take India's separate culture basis into account nor do they see any movement in Indian thought. They treat it like an isolated event, non-organized in time. Spengler and Gebser are aware of both the different tradition of Indian thought and the problem of facing it in a non-European cultural context. Spengler refuses to move any philosophical content across the culture gap. His hermeneutic consciously restricts itself to the principle of historiosophical form analogies. Gebser, who wants to exchange content on a universal level of meaning, pursues a hermeneutic based on psychological polarity.

The cultural provocation which we saw reflected by the various forms of German pessimism also leads within or around the metaphysical core of pessimism to a philosophical solution. Philosophically, we observe a cultural level of departure, on which India occupies a significant position, and an explicit or implicit metaphysical achievement. Pessimism, which in all the personal variants we have described and analyzed evolves between these two levels, presents no case of ultimate philosophical desperation.

We have analyzed the belief in change which underlies German pessimism as a reaction against culture. Indian belief in change follows a mystical, not a metaphysical orientation. In order to expose the actual meanings of the Indian concepts employed by our Germans, we shall present and describe these concepts in some Indian traditional contexts. Using our own hermeneutic, we shall try to mediate from a meta-philosophical position between such now familiar German concepts as will, suffering, annihilation, ignorance, illusion, or individuality and their (possible) Indian counterparts. We expect that our reversed perspective, this time from an Indian angle, will corroborate that the conceptual links which the Germans used to associate India with pessimism were essentially German, not Indian.

Part II: The Indian background

Chapter Six

The mystical axis of Indian philosophy: according to Agehananda Bharati, in the Upaniṣads, and in the Bhagavadgītā

When we introduced our meta-concept of philosophy we stated that the problem of comparing Indian and Western thought is one of compatibility. This means that the corresponding parts or principles of such a comparison should contain some compatible elements, regardless of how small these may be. No matter which feature of Indian philosophy we are going to describe, we have committed ourselves to relate it to Western philosophy through the initially established meta-concept, which is our declared device against an entanglement in the necessary hermeneutic prejudices. In order to formulate such a comparative relationship we must try to understand the Indian terms and texts in question. Since with a view to our hermeneutic, we require some historical and philosophical basis, we intend to look for the earliest type of reference to philosophical Indian thought, or at least try to find some of its fundamental impulses. Within the framework of our discussion, these philosophical impulses shall represent what we consider as the structural "core event" in Indian philosophy. As we have mentioned in the Introduction, we are assuming that the ultimate aim of Indian philosophy, as conveyed through the multifarious forms of expression within its tradition, points back to the fact that the

original revelations of the ancient rsis were based on mystical insights or experience.(1) Such mystical experience is generally considered "ineffable", that is to say, beyond the possibilities of verbal expression.(2) And yet reference to the experience is abundant, resulting in what one could perhaps call an extensive, indirect form of description. In this sense, the first utterances recorded in the Upanisads provide the most intimate descriptions of this central insight which we may ever hope to receive from ancient Indian philosophy. However, these early descriptions only imply the mystical experience. We shall, therefore, also include modern, presumably more explicit description in our discussion in order to show as much as possible, if not about the mystical experience as such, at least about the conditions under which it may take place and which may lead to certain forms of statements about it.

Western tradition, as we have illustrated through our German thinkers, tends to distinguish rather clearly between mysticism and philosophy: when Schopenhauer incorporated what he considered the essence of Brahmanism into the presentation of his own philosophy, he clearly distinguished his personal philosophical approach from the form of insight revealed by the authors of the Upanisads, who had struck him as almost super-human individuals. Providing what he considered a coherent intellectual structure for a collection of fragmentary insights into ultimate truth, i.e., by paralleling certain products of ancient Indian intuitive thought, he served as a personal example of his distinction between philosophers and mystics. (Von Hartmann dissolves this distinction, p. 82; Gebser recognizes the mystic as a distinct type but subjects the mystical experience of "being-reality" to a cultural-psychological qualification, p. 163.) While in Europe the two traditions have, in principle, developed independently, in India

---

(1) Stace (Mystics, p. 20): "The Upanisads...are among the oldest records of mysticism in the world."

(2) James (Experience, p. 380) writes: "Ineffability - the handiest of the marks by which I classify a state of mind as mystical is negative.... its quality must be directly experienced."

they have been connected ab origine. Therefore, when crediting the Upanisads with the presentation of the first steps of philosophical thought in India, we should bear in mind that they must have followed primarily mystical impulses, or drawn on some sort of intuitive knowledge.(3) The content and style of their texts as well as their technical terminology suggest that their direct origin lies in a common body of systematic knowledge which was conceived spontaneously and intuitively. But we are not informed as to whether the anonymous authors of the Upanisads received their knowledge from some obscure seers or whether authors and seers were identical. The traditional Indian viewpoint keeps well aloof from this question, because it considers the Upanisads as divine revelation and not as historical texts which could be traced back to certain individual mystics or seers. Yet, for our philosophical comparison we cannot entirely separate these two perspectives, since we are interested in a functional meaning of representative Indian terms and texts.

In order to facilitate a principle understanding of the mystical foundations of Indian philosophy we shall first concentrate on what could possibly be said about the personal situation of a mystic. From his individual mystical experience we shall then turn to the methods of propagation or publication which he may employ in relating

---

(3) Müller (Ved., pp. 22-23) writes: "When we read the Upanisads, the impression they leave on our mind is that they are sudden intuitions or inspirations, which sprang up here and there, and were collected afterwards. And yet there is system in all these dreams, there is a common background to all these visions. There is even an abundance of technical terms used by different speakers so exactly in the same sense that one feels certain that behind all these lightning-flashes of religious and philosophical thought there is a distant past, a dark background of which we shall never know the beginning. There are words, there are phrases, there are whole lines and verses which recur in different Upanisads, and which must have been drawn from a common treasury, or where it was hidden, and yet accessible to the sages of the Upanisad."

it culturally. We, with a view to our description, try to understand the mystical origin theoretically. The Indian philosopher, whose philosophical comments do not include any such theoretical, historical explanation, makes the mystical phenomenon, at least formally, a permanent object of his practical interest (vidyā, jñāna, prajñā). Both the ancient, practical aspect of the mystical experience and the later or even current theoretical one are connected by some cultural continuity, especially through their related philosophies. This means that, when we are trying to describe the actually ineffable mystical experience, we must be aware of the fact that all reference to it is made through some culture-specific medium. Although the mystical experience as such seems to be "neutral", the personality of the remembering mystic must be expected to reflect his cultural background under any circumstances.(4) The talking mystic, knowingly or unknowingly, is committed to his own culture-bound mystical description. Therefore, his information reaches us only through some kind of "cultural filter" which necessarily structures the form of his expression (but, presumably, not its content). In the interest of an intimate understanding we prefer to first accept the information as it comes, tentatively identifying ourselves with the mystic and, so to speak, committing ourselves by proxy. Then, remembering our original commitment to our meta-concept, we must step back in order to analyze the given context. In short, our study of the described experience has to include those who describe it, since each description also describes itself.

---

(4) Stace (Mystics, pp. 20-21) makes the fundamental remark that, although the core of the experience may commonly be described as "an undifferentiated unity", we should bear in mind that "concepts such as 'one', 'unity', 'undifferentiated', 'God', 'Nirvana', etc., are only applied to the experience after it has passed and when it is being remembered". Katz (Myst., p. 26) adds that "all experience is processed through, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways".

Expressing the essential concepts and contents in terms of our meta-concept, we intent to expose in which manner and to which extent they might correspond with the key concepts of German pessimism. This comparison on the basis of compatible criteria and under due recognition of diverse cultural developments should help us to decide to which extent Indian thought could have influenced the essence, not just the expression, of German pessimism.

Adopting a combined sociological and historical approach, we shall first give an illustration of how in recent years the problem of describing the mystical experience has been tackled practically as well as theoretically, and from it we shall critically expose the difficulty of treating the mystical experience objectively.(5) This method of paralleling the modern mystic with the mystical ancient seer is, of course, only one of approximation. We cannot truly identify the two types because the inner (psychological) and the outer (cultural) circumstances of today can never be the same as in ancient times. But through our discussion of the specific connections of mystical thought, its description and its cultural implication we hope to clarify the hermeneutic problem.

---

(5) Criticism, in Sir Karl Popper's words (Op.Soc.II, p. 215), "consists in pointing out contradictions either within the theory to be criticized, or between it and some facts of experience". For us this definition would also have to imply the need for an awareness of the consequences of merely potential error or deception, especially since our hermeneutic, by relying on the use of quasi-objective, but actually culturally subjective views and reports, requires our personal philosophical commitment (objectified in our meta-concept).

(A) Agehananda Bharati's description of the "ineffable", and the hermeneutic problem of culture awareness

(1) The mystical experience: a reaction between Indian phrases

It would be ideal if, for the purpose of discussing the mystical axis of Indian philosophy, we could refer to a genuine modern mystic who relates his experience in scholarly Western language and, preferably, with a bearing on Indian thought. This combination, as it seems, is offered in the work of Agehananda Bharati.[6] He includes personal reports through which we receive some first hand information, while his manner of interpretation provides us with the opportunity to raise and discuss the question of culture awareness.

According to Bharati, "a mystic is a person who says 'I am a mystic', or words to that effect, consistently, when questioned about his most important pursuit (a statement) which has to have a general widely applicable meaning". This first part of what he calls an operational definition of a mystic is followed by a second, material part which concentrates on one specific type of religious experience: "It is the person's intuition of numerical oneness with the cosmic absolute, with the universal matrix, or with any essence stipulated by the various theological and speculative systems of the world."[7] Having chosen Bharati as our leading exemplifier for mysticism, we find it suitable to adhere to his definition, at least so far as our

---

(6) Born in Vienna in 1923, originally named Leopold Fischer, he grew up in Austria. In 1948 he went to India in pursuit of the Hindu view of life. He was ordained a monk in the Sannyāsi order in 1951, and, in 1953, he obtained tantric initiation. In 1961 he joined the University of Syracuse, New York, as a social anthropologist (Robe, p. 152; Light, p. 41).

(7) Bharati, Light, p. 25. He considers his definition in ethnosemantic terms as "etic", i.e. generally widely applicable, as opposed to "emic", i.e. in a restricted sense, restricted to a non-representative group. This distinction is also of interest with regard to his cultural self-identification inasmuch as his "etic" remains Eurocentrically rational.

study assumes mysticism in Indian thought. (The previous connotations of mysticism encountered in the views of Schopenhauer, von Hartmann or our other thinkers follow evidently from their own specific philosophical approaches.) Bharati illustrates his definition of mysticism by giving us several descriptions of personal mystical experiences.(8) His free use of Indian terminology in this connection strikes us as a noteworthy characteristic to which we shall make special reference when discussing the role of culture in mystical descriptions.

Bharati begins: "One night when I was about twelve, it happened for the first time. I was falling asleep, when the whole world turned into one: one entity, one indivisible certainty. No euphoria, no colours, just a deadeningly sure oneness of which I was at the center - and everything else was just this, and nothing else. For a fraction of a minute perhaps, I saw nothing, felt nothing, but was that oneness, empty of content and feeling....and I knew that this was the meaning of what I had been reading for a year or so - the Upanisadic dictum of oneness, and the literature around and about it."(9) When, as he reports, many years later he has his second experience, Upanisadic terminology plays a much more explicit role: "I was suddenly everything, the All, and I surveyed everything that was. For a moment, or for an hour - I no longer know which - I was that which is proclaimed in the four great axioms of Upanishad wisdom: Aham brahmasmi - I am the Absolute; tattvamasi - Thou art that; prajñātma brahma - the conscious self is the Absolute; sarvam khalvidam brahma - everything that is is truly the Brahman....I am God - that is the supreme wisdom; I - not the unimportant, physical bodied I, not the wishing I, not the intellectual I - but the all one impersonal I which alone exists. I experienced all this in that blessed moment for which I had not directly striven. And after that it took over ten years of hard monastic asceticism before I was and then even only momentarily, able

---

(8) We are of course not concerned with the authenticity of these experiences but with Bharati's principal argument.

(9) Bharati, Light, p. 39.

to recover that intuition."[10] More than thirty years after this experience of mystical identification he recalls: "The certainty of a mystical consummation entailed for me that the scripture was right, that it corroborated my experience,...that in an irreverently anachronistic fashion, I had authenticated the Upanisad."[11] When he tells us about his third experience, which happened in the wake of certain tantric exercises in Assam, he adds a statement of philosophical interest which we want to bear in mind. Referring to having yet another experience of identity with the universe, he recalls: "This was it again, with no real addition in value to the previous two, although with a somewhat greater intensity than either, I think. By that time, I knew that the state was achievable, that there could be no doubt about its absoluteness; and as I was a fair philosopher by that time in the technical sense, I was not involved in ontological pretense, for then, as now, I believed there are no ontological implications."[12] The fourth experience happened, as he reports, in connection with a very beautiful woman. Together with her he had partaken of a psychosomatic drug. As he tells us, "I had a marvellous vision: her whole womb took a bright golden hue, it looked, and struck me immediately, like the brahmānda, the Golden Egg of the Indian cosmogeny....But when this spectacle subsided and I withdrew from her, I was again all that, with nothing whatever excluded....There was no god to speak of, except myself....I was it - not again, but always."

The essential element in all these four descriptions, which Bharati presents quite in accordance with his own definition of mysticism, is his undoubted feeling of oneness, absoluteness and centralness. Having chosen to express himself in terms stipulated by the brahmanical scriptures his testimony draws straight on the mahāvākyas of the Upanisads, those four fundamental statements, which he literally feels to have authenticated through his own experience. However he distinguishes very clearly between the completely private

---

(10) Bharati, Robe, p. 59.

(11) Bharati, Light, p. 41.

(12) Bharati, Light, p. 42.

nature of this authentication of (Upanisadic) reality and the philosophical problem of conferring some onlogical status on the essence of the experience.[13] The majority of mystics, he says, were not and are not aware of this important distinction. He concludes that as a direct consequence of this "ontological fallacy" virtually all of the ancient rsis must have wrongly believed that they could actually see truth as it existed outside as well as inside of them.[14] (He mentions as the only exceptions Nāgārjuna, who, apart from "denying ontological status to any experience", as Bharati puts it, declared that the mystic's experience could not add anything to his knowledge about the world, and Patañjali, who considered īśvara, the divine object of contemplation, redundant after the mystical experience had happened.) Bharati's judgement implies that the views of the rsis must have been developed on similar grounds as his. He does not concede that they had ne concept of "culture" (not even anti- or para-Buddhist) and that without such an outer level of reaction they could, indeed, have equated inside and outside.

As he observes, according to Indian tradition their unquestioned experience creates the scripture. However, for the experience as such, as he explains very clearly, it is quite irrelevant whether the mystical union with a certain doctrinal matrix is interpreted in ontological or in epistemological terms. (He remarks that only the Buddhist mystics are spared from having to explain their merger or oneness with a divine matrix - i.e. the total union of two different things which both have ontological status - since all schools deny ontological reality to Buddhahood (although some ontological reality is often admitted for one's own individual person).) He leaves

---

(13) Bharati, Robe, p. 237; Light, pp. 42, 97.

(14) The Western subject-object dichotomy cannot be applied to mystically centred Indian philosophy. Smart (Mys.Ex.(Soph.), p. 21) clearly reasons that "the mystical experience can neither be subjective nor objective - for order and disorder (i.e. the necessary criteria) can only exist where there is a multiplicity of distinguishable items, and no such multiplicity can exist in an undifferentiated unity".

no doubt about the fundamental limitation of any mystical descriptions or descriptive comments: from the mystic's point of view non of these can ever match the actual experience. Besides, mystical language, as he emphasizes, follows culture.[15] Whatever the cultural connection of the mystic's language may be and whatever concepts he may choose through which to tell the rest of the world something about his experience, it remains essentially his private property which cannot be shared with other people. Any change resulting directly from his experience must occur within the mystic's own personality.[16] (Compare the aspect of ontological Awakening discussed on p. 253.)

(2) The mystical experience: a "neutral" position outside of tradition

This "zero-experience",[17] as Bharati has termed the state of mystical consummation, provides the absolute starting-point for his descriptive attempts. Beyond this he looks no further for a final cause. He simply points to the fact that various known or unknown external circumstances may trigger the experience. As he explains, it may equally well occur in connection with certain drugs or after hard monastic asceticism, implying that such conditioning circumstances are merely concomitants. He emphasizes that the experience never did come to him as a result of his regular meditation, nor did it so come to any of his numerous fellow monks whom, as he claims, he examined intimately. Many scholars,

---

(15) Bharati, Light, pp. 44-46, 61-62.

(16) "The genuine mystic as a person remains the person he was before - a king, a knave, a dentist" (Light, p. 53). "But there are hardly any mystics who do in fact go on as though nothing had happened" (p. 133). "We might even say that the perennial mode of the mystic's self-report is that of change" (p. 99).

(17) Bharati, Light, p. 48. In this expression he consciously tries to combine a philosophical aspect, inasmuch as "there is zero content of a cognitive sort in the experience", with a technical aspect, calling "any consummative experience a zero-experience, within each universe of discourse".

Western and Indian, find it hard to understand that, as he writes, "the genuine mystic may be neither a saint, nor a theologian, nor a humanist, but just a person who had the zero-experience".(18) He is amazed that in particular they do not want to accept that mysticism could centre not only on ascetic effort but also on euphoric or hedonistic experience, a view for which he also claims Upanisadic support.

Bharati, in order to introduce some concept which could help us to fill the gap between a presumable but totally invisible cause of the mystical experience on the one hand and those visible and describable circumstances on the other hand, suggests that one admit something like "chance, good luck or psychosomatic readiness".(19) He believes that so far no deliberate procedure has ever guaranteed the mystical vision, which, as it stands, remains unpredictable. Quite explicitly our fortuitous mystic states that "whatever chance throws the person into the zero-event, the actions and passions that lead up to it, chronologically, in an individual's life are irrelevant to the autonomous experience, and this is what all mystics report". Now, if there is no causal connection between sādhana and siddhi, the effect and the achievement, why do people still engage in all these special practices, he asks. The answer we receive is as striking as it is obvious after what we have learnt so far: whatever effort a person decides to undertake just reflects his individual predilection. That is all. If we accept Bharati's idea of chance in terms of psychosomatic readiness, relating it to certain (unpredictable) releasing influences,

---

(18) Bharati, Light, p. 62; on p. 124 he adds: "Mystics can be saints, they can be vicious tyrants, or anything else." This view is already expressed by von Hartmann (Ph.d.U., p. 289).

(19) Bharati, Light, p. 65; on p. 174 he refers to it as "Grace talk", implying ultimate inexplicability or a "somewhat cynical nescio"; technically, "the ṛsis and ācāryas, the original teachers of mystic wisdom, of Vedānta and yoga, had their answer...: neither practice nor meditation, nor any other deed takes you there". Cf. our p. 265, anugraha.

it would follow that the conscious efforts are as much subject to chance as the other more random influencing circumstances. In brief, the division between directed efforts and any unsolicited influence would then appear as a merely formal one. Feeling that these things have never been stated so frankly before, Bharati sums up: "The zero-experience comes to those to whom it comes, regardless of what they do; it also comes, I believe, to those few who try very hard over a long period of time." Plotinus, as we may remember, had made such persistent efforts. The presumed novelty of Bharati's statement culminates in the view that, although a disciplined approach may be quite common, it "does not in any way lessen the possibility that many people who don't try at all have the zero-experience anyway - I would think this covers about half of all mystics of all times and climes. And it is this fact which the scholar and the ecclesiastic resent."(20) Denying any moral or social value to the (unpredictable) zero-experience as such, he recommends it to the mystically inclined on purely personal and practical grounds: as "a skill which confers delight" and protects "against boredom and despair".(21)

Bharati is convinced that his outlook is not only perfectly compatible with Hinduism but that it even promotes it. Others have been more sceptical. Throughout India, as he lets us know very frankly, he was often met with a certain amount of suspicion regarding his assumed Hindu identity, exactly as his own guru, Viśvānanda Bhāratī, after having given him sannyāsa, had predicted.(22) One of the most sophisticated tests prepared for him by Hindu scrutiny is his encounter with the Śaṃkarācārya of the East.(23) Agehānanda Bhāratī is received here as a Hindu exception, since, as he reports himself, it is understood that "none of the others who have worn the ochre robe had to choose this culture, as they were born into it". Less obvious to the assembled monks appear his views on Hindu doctrine (i.e. essentially as outlined

---

(20) Bharati, Light, p. 66.

(21) Bharati, Light, pp. 74-75.

(22) Bharati, Robe, p. 156.

(23) Bharati, Robe, pp. 236-243.

above). He teaches them that those beliefs related to the existence or non-existence of mystical objects, such as the brahman, have to remain private commitments, whereas public commitments result from one's attitude towards things. The mystic, he assures them, remains silent about his actual experience which remains naturally private, because it would be a fallacy to infer any truth from it.(24) And he adds - resorting to English - "that private experience of an object of the religious sort does not confer existential status on the object".(25) His belief that "what is totally committing is totally incommunicable" represents for him "the only possible humanistic (sic) interpretation of Advaita-monism", whereby he makes the point that "humanism involves the use of the human per se, not as a paradigm of the Absolute". We even hear a somewhat familiar pessimistic undertone when he deplores that the Bhagavadgītā's call for the individual's total identification with the Lord "implies something most depressing to the critical humanist: human beings are interesting and to be served only sub specie divinitatis, not as autonomous individuals in their own right - for the status of the individual is māyā, a sort of illusion and something to be transcended. It is the individual qua individual one has to get rid of, so that God can shine forth."(26) He argues that all traditional Hindu explanations perpetuate only the old images without revealing the truth, since it is ineffable. Bharati's usurped neti-neti stance is not new (compare p. 201(6)). But he ignores that the mystical Hindu traditions, if we do not want to let them originate from some ancient mental inadequacies, must root in a different consciousness structure which at one time made it possible to produce much more direct,

(24) Bharati (Analysis, pp. 121-122) deplores that for the orthodox Indian thinker "salvation - variously styled mukti, mokṣa, apavarga, kaivalya, turīya, nirvāṇa, etc. - is the sole real concern of the philosopher and all logic and other philosophical discipline but ancillary to it". Warning modern Indians against the intellectual dishonesty in such a claim, he advises them that "today, however, it cannot be got away with in spite of all efforts to keep up the scholastic status quo".

(25) Bharati, Robe, p. 237 = Light, p. 82.

(26) Bharati, Robe, p. 120; Light, p. 64.

acultural, descriptions. Bharati sums up his differentiating view declaring that "yoga and monastic life - in short, the mystical world view - are ways of doing, of practicing certain things; philosophies, eastern and western alike, are ways of thinking things". Having presented his clever views on Hindu thought, he lets the Śaṃkarācārya deny "that they are incompatible with the tradition; they are just a rather extraordinary way of seeing the tradition".

(3) Bharati's problematic culture awareness

Bharati's sociological-philosophical description of mysticism relies on a form of comparative intercultural criticism which itself may be used for an assessment of his level of culture awareness. We can accept with Bharati that the mystical experience as such should be considered as something "neutral" and "unchangeable"; but as soon as we come to mystical description and interpretation it has to appear in relation to some cultural environment. (As we stated initially, it is our European perspective which makes the mystical explicit.) In order to present mysticism on a culture-free, "neutral" level, our informant and philosopher tries to combine two major perspectives, a traditional Indian one and a modern humanistic Western one both of which have to take their bearings from his own "private" and ineffable experience.

The complexity of Bharati's role as an exponent and critic of mysticism is further increased by his personal involvement in Hinduism. He is well aware of the sociological borderlines which he draws up very scientifically for the protection of his claims qua mystic and qua Hindu, i.e., he is a mystic and a Hindu by his own general definition (p. 183(7)). Having discovered his talent and inclination for mysticism, Bharati sets out to become a genuine Hindu, in addition to his European cultural heritage. Seeing himself as fostering no ethnocentrism, he for a while "goes native". Temporarily emerging from this inside experience of Hindu culture he splits his role of a participant observer (one either participates or observes) and, thus detached, subjects Hinduism to his cultural criticism which he rates as the only "intercultural contribution which

can be made on the communicatory, discursive level".(27)

This criticism of Hindu thought appears ultimately more as a revolt than as a perpetuation or unification. Instead of trying to explain why genuine Hindu thought must manifest itself quite legitimately in conformity with its tradition (for example, by illuminating such Indian equivalents to the concept of "truth" as jñāna or brahmavidyā in their own autonomous sphere of meaning), Bharati simply contradicts selected aspects of Hinduism in a rational manner on the basis of some supposedly objective humanism, which necessarily conflicts with the tradition of Indian thought. Consequently, it is not surprising that, although he professes the desire to absorb Hinduism, its spokesmen only accept him with reservation. Humanism is not an element of Indian culture. Besides, his "humanism" is antiquated and lags even behind Nietzsche's idea of "dehumanization". Nevertheless, Bharati decrees that the "humanist" view provides an adequate basis for culture criticism. Unfortunately he ignores the fact that he de-Indianizes all Indian phenomena and concepts when he tries to evaluate them on non-Indian grounds from which they have not originated. His attitude even seems to suggest that for Indian thought the time has come to have some of its supposed age-old errors corrected by modern (rational) Western thinking. (We feel reminded of our Schopenhauerians who, less theatrically though, also tended to annex Indian wisdom in order to improve it.)

With a brief reference to Gebser's perspective we could say that underlying the comments and descriptions by the ṛṣis there may have existed a form of consciousness, or a mode of thought, which reflected a "feeling of wholeness" that precluded any culture-oriented reasoning on their part. Gebser's view implies that the undifferentiated form of the ṛṣis' inner and outer truth corresponds with a certain non-dualistic, pre-rational consciousness structure. In Bharati's opinion the ṛṣis were rationally mistaken; they had followed an ontological fallacy which ought to be rationally corrected, on the basis of his humanist conception of man's self-identity.

---

(27) Bharati, Robe, pp. 201, 274.

Bharati's approach contains no parallel to Gebser's attempt of an arational, diaphanous view of the two separate traditions, or perhaps something like Gadamer's hermeneutic movement, nor would he consider an interpretation of mystical change from some meta-position. His zero-experience functions deceptively as some sort of pseudo-meta-level in that he does not use it as a hermeneutic link or connecting point to elucidate the role of Indian terms and texts, which he only employes to decorate his description of mysticism. In his declared capacity as a mystic he identifies with the <u>ṛṣis</u>. But instead of comparing his own mystical experience with the role of the mystical impulse in Indian thought he excludes it from his philosophical discussion as a "private commitment", and then tries to replenish a now essenceless Indian thought with European principles, substituting his humanistic predilections as a general philosophical basis. He figures that once in the Hindu fold (as so consistently expressed through his costume), his good intentions would be sufficient to make him a natural promoter of Hindu thought. It eludes him that a hermeneutic for a Western approach to Indian culture and thought cannot be replaced by an attempted annexation of a "Hindu" identity which was merely produced by some <u>ad hoc</u> definition. Bharati is certainly not a Hindu, as he wants to believe. He forgets that a complete Hindu identity would not only require something like a rationally "correct" compliance with Hindu culture at the moment when he makes the identity statement, but must include origin. Similarly, he ignores that the tradition of Indian thought has to follow its own primary impulse, which may come from some unqualified source.

If we look at Indian text manifestations as essentially identical with already existing "thinking" which is simply there, i.e., if texts are manifested thinking, then we could consider textual understanding, together with the mystical experience, as ranging somewhere along the line of the primary impulse which leaves "thinking" essentially unaffected. "Thinking" in terms of the textual essence of <u>śruti</u> would necessarily have to remain inaccessible to the general mental effort based on sensory perception

or inference.[28] However, the "willed", i.e. successfully connected, event of understanding, especially in terms of a primary impulse, would be more a happened reception than an accomplished feat, and more a matter of mental quality than of active mental ability. Bharati aptly refers to this quality aspect as "psychosomatic readiness", but he tries to elucidate the contentual side from a cultural perspective to the extent of even putting an "ontological fallacy" at the origin of Indian philosophy, instead of considering the less somatic principle of texts and thinking, which would have been more Indian. He strikes us as making a rather one-sided effort when he interprets the revealed text, śruti, as the product of the ṛṣis' fallacious equation of their cultural values with their ineffable experience. He says, the mystic makes the scripture. But it does not occur to him that the Indian manner, certainly the ancient Indian manner, of seeing the world could well have functioned without involving any culture-oriented rationally conceptualizing process of interpretation. The Indian mystic needs not and cannot see understanding as a cultural function, but only as something to be intended, since "thinking" is already "there". Hence it seems unnecessary and paradoxical to insist that, notwithstanding any primary impulse such as the mystical experience, Indian texts are culturally derived, as Bharati would have it.

From our meta-position we notice that the practical side of the problem again points to the role of culture awareness: if all have the same culture they can talk about things, not realizing that they

---

(28) Deutsch and van Buitenen (Adv.Ved., pp. 5-6) comment that revelation, śruti, "is authoritative only about matters to which neither perception nor inference give us access; but then it is fully authoritative". "It is axiomatic that revelation is infallible, and this infallibility can be defended only if it is authorless...it is given with the world.... While we would be inclined to look upon the Revelation as a more or less continuous series of historic texts, spanning close to a millennium from ca. 1400 B.C. till 500 B.C., orthodoxy looks upon it as eternal and therefore simultaneous."

are only talking about talk and not about the actual things. Before the advent of Buddhism, the ṛṣis could not be aware of the fact that they were surrounded by a culture which might one day give rise to contrastable reactions. Meta-philosophically speaking, until Buddhism, the mystical experience might have bestowed ontological status upon its content. By imposing an "ontological fallacy" on the beginnings of Indian thought Bharati bars himself from discovering that the ṛṣis did not conceive of their experience as something personal, but rather followed an impersonal primary impulse, from which the subsequent textual tradition also derives its orientation. Thus, he finds "something most depressing" in the Bhagavadgītā simply because he imagines (a bit like Gebser) that it contains an appeal to dissolve one's personal identity in a divine one, a condition which, supposedly, was only alleviated when, due to Western influence, Arjuna could also be presented with a revalued individuality.(29) Bharati behaves as if (qua Hindu) he was under an obligation to follow the Bhagavadgītā; but the Indian is actually free to choose other sources. Besides, the tradition affords the option of an entirely personalistic interpretation, as exemplified by the majority of our epic heroes who do not follow Kṛṣṇa. Naturally, Bharati prefers to derive his identity from a range of culturally differentiated private and public commitments, such as his zero-experience on the one hand and his socio-physiognomical and philosophical observations on the other hand. This may suggest that the depressing aspect which, for example, the Bhagavadgītā conveys to him consists in an imagined threat to his cultural identity. Although we have considered this problem alien to Indian thought as such, it would

---

(29) Bharati (Hindu Ren., p. 287): "The man of the Indian Renaissance can identify with Arjuna and he can neglect those passages which represent the canonical, quietistic stream which submerged the individual, as it were, before it could acquire the value and the dignity humanism had generated." Hacker traces, as a historical curiosity, the impact of Schopenhauer's and Deussen's "pseudo-Vedāntic tat-tvam-asi-ethics", reimported by such neo-Vedāntists as Vivekananda, on modern Indian thought (cf. Schoph., pp. 385, 391, 396).

seem possible to us as a reflection of some pessimistic projection of a Eurocentric form of identity. It appears that Bharati's entire argument, regardless of its cheerful and optimistic undertone, contains a highly personalistic reaction against his own culture including his own enculturation. His very explicit aspiration to a Hindu identity in conformity with his cultural criticism merely seems symptomatic. Behind his erudite assertions, complemented by a display of satiracl and sensual wit, he cultivates an approach to thinking which is essentially European, but not Indian. (His excellent demystification of the mystical does not require any reassurance by India.) Bharati's methodological contribution to a comparative understanding of Indian thought affects us as predominantly negative; the characterologically descriptive value of his mystical and cultural observations is impressive.

(B) The Upanisads

The origin of what from a Western point of view today may appear as a pessimistic attitude towards life (i.e. not a metaphysical concept) in the history of Indian culture can be traced back to some of the earliest Upanisads.[1] The two fundamental ideas of the Upanisads, those to which all comments and responses do essentially refer, are the brahman, as the cosmical principle of the world, and the ātman, as the psychical, which are identified with one another and usually employed together.[2] In their original Indian context they represent a mystical, non-cultural impulse, as we wish to illustrate further by the following four groups of examples (a - d).

(1) Early traces of an Indian pessimisitc attitude

(a.1) Chāndogya Upanisad

In this Upanisad we find, according to Deussen, one of the oldest statements of the brahman's identity with the ātman (3.14).[3] This

---

(1) Deussen (Phil.Ups., pp. 22-26) suggests the following chronological groupings: (a) the ancient Prose Upanisads, (b) the Metrical Upanisads, (c) the later Prose Upanisads, and (d) the later Atharva Upanisads (a very mixed group including numerous younger treatises). These texts do not constitute a single coherent system, as he points out (pp. 51-52), but the total philosophical product from 1000 or 800 B.C. to c. 500 B.C., reaching its climax in the Vedāntic philosophy of Bādarāyana and Śaṅkara. Werner (Yoga, p. 31) suggests 700 - 300 B.C.

(2) Deussen (Phil.Ups., p. 38) elaborates: "Where a difference reveals itself, Brahman appears as the older and less intelligible expression, ātman as the later and more significant; Brahman as the unknown that needs to be explained, ātman as the known through which the other unknown finds its explanation, Brahman as the first principle so far as it is comprehended in the universe, ātman so far as it is known as the inner self of man."

(3) Deussen, S.Ups., p. 109.

is expounded where Upakosala, the disciple of Satyakāma, is told by their sacrificial fires that these - or rather the brahman within them - are identical with the man or spirit (puruṣa) in the sun, the moon or lightning (4.10-15). Then Satyakāma reveals that the man in the eye is the ātman which is the brahman. Deussen, who interprets this "seer of seeing" as the (Kantian) subject of knowledge, considers it contradictory to the final part of this explanation where Upakosala is told that the knowing, when they die, go to various places, including the sun, the moon and lightning, whence they are taken to the brahman. Obviously, from a rational point of view those who have found the brahman within themselves should have no more need to be taken to the brahman. However, this contradictory dualistic aspect fades away as soon as we see it in the light of Gebser's polar view, in which he pays special attention to the role of the moon, as we shall see below. Satyakāma, the teacher, ends his description with the statement that for those going this "path of the gods" there is no return to the earthly whirlpool (4.15.6). A similar explanation saying that sorrow (śoka) is overcome by the one who knows the ātman (7.1.3) strikes Deussen as a sign of early Upanisadic pessimism (cf. p. 112).(4) However, we find that despite a certain disapproval of the quality of life on earth, the question of how horrible a return would be continues to be left wide open for a long time.

Even the following, rather different, two doctrines of transmigration, recorded side by side, allow for some pleasant element in their cycles. In the "doctrine of the five fires" (Chānd. 5.4.1 - 5.9.2 = Brh. 6.2.9 - 6.2.14) man, after having died, is sacrificed by the gods in five stages (through faith, the moon (somo rājā), rain, food, sperm) thereby passing through the analogous "sacrificial fires" (the other world, the god of rain (Parjana), the earth, man, woman) to be reborn in his human form. Nothing suggests that the return to earth, which characterizes this "path of the fathers" (pitryāna), might be

(4) Deussen, Phil.Ups., p. 254(2); similarly he sees pessimism in the dualistic aspect of the brahman: "Everything else is suffering" (Brh. 3.4.2, 3.5.1, 3.7.23).

undesirable. The other version, the "doctrine of the two ways" (Chānd. 5.10 = Brh. 6.2.15-16), describes similar stages after death. However, it also mentions the "path of the gods" (devayāna) for those who retire to the forest and practice faith as asceticism (Chānd.), or faith and truth (Brh.), and who eventually go (from the stage of lightning, as mentioned above) into the brahman whence there is no return. In this case faith leads to the brahman, whereas, in the "doctrine of the five fires" it is rewarded by a return to earth. In the "doctrine of the two ways" this return to earth - after enjoyment with the gods on the moon - represents the alternative reserved for those who have lived a decent village life. But both Upanisads clearly point out ways to avoid further existence on earth. Near the end of the Chāndogya Upanisad a parting disciple expresses the wish that he not have to enter into something "toothless, grey and slimy" (8.14). Whatever his apprehension may have been, we notice here a distinct juxtaposition of the immortal brahman-ātman on the one hand and some undesirable earthly aspect on the other hand. The final words, repeating the prospect of no return to this world (8.15), give us a clue about where Schopenhauer received some essential impulses for his own views on metempsychosis and liberation (p. 58).

(a.2) Brhadāranyaka Upanisad

Some of the terminology used in the Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya Upanisads has been regarded as unambiguously mystical by Agehananda Bharati reporting his own "authentication" of the mahāvākyas (p. 185). In a more philosophical manner Schopenhauer, too, has recognized their mystical nature.

Thus we learn (Brh. 1.4.1) how the beginning of the world is marked by the ātman who, seeing nothing but himself in the shape of a man (purusa), says: "This is I" (aham ayam). Analogously (in Brh. 1.4.10), the beginning of the world is also marked by the brahman who, identifying with the universe, speaks: "I am brahman" (aham brahma asmi). Then, weary of his state of oneness which afforded no delight, "he desired a second" (sa dvitiyam aicchat)(1.4.3); or, he simply announces: "May I be many" (bahu syām)(Chānd. 4.2.3).

A further link in the mystical tradition is established when (in Chānd. 6.8 - 6.16) Śvetaketu is taught by his father that he should consider himself identical with the essence of the world, the ātman: "That art thou, Śvetaketu" (tat tvam asi). This identity is explained to him metaphorically by letting him discover the ubiquitous nature of salt once it is dissolved in water (Chānd. 6.13). The secret of mystical identity is also revealed by the sage Yājñavalkya to his wife Maitreyī: when he is about to withdraw from the world, she asks him for instruction about immortality. Thereupon he explains that earthly goods will never yield such a thing. Instead, she would have to understand that the basis of all reality of this world is the ātman (Brh. 2.4.1-6, repeated in 4.5.1-6). Yājñavalkya, too, uses the salt metaphor to describe to Maitreyī the dissolution of any consciousness based on the usual sense perception (Brh. 2.4.12-14).

It seems that Gebser may have received some impulse from this Upaniṣad regarding his conception of an ego-dissolving time-ocean. Furthermore, he is particularly interested in the role of the moon in connection with the mentioned pitryāna and devayāna in support of his idea of a lunar "death pole" of the "soul" (p. 164(41)): when after death the different parts of man (puruṣa) make their way to their correspondent cosmic parts, the ātman goes into space (ākāśa) while the mind (manas) has an encounter with the moon (Brh. 3.2.13).(5) Or, more specifically, whoever wants to pass beyond the moon in order to avoid rebirth must indicate that he understands his essential identity with it by stating: "I am you (Kauṣītaki Up. 1.2). According to Gebser's interpretation (in which he draws up connections between the Greek μήν (month) and μήνη (moon), and the Sanskrit manas) there exists a complementary relation between thinking and soul (which in

(5) Mrs. Rhys Davids (Manual, p. 91) makes some interesting criticism regarding Deussen's insistence on man's (the soul's) being rather than his becoming (kvāyam tadā puruṣo bhavati; Brh. 3.2.13). This conflict between her own empirical and Deussen's metaphysical perspective appears insubstantial from Gebser's arational point of view (compare our p. 66(54), empiricism as un-Schopenhauerian).

this context appear somehow as two different aspects of manas). The thinking mind mirrors, and in a way measures, the lunar soul-mind; this means that the soul is realated with the moon (including its timing quality) and accordingly appears there after death.

Man's condition, should he have to reappear on earth, is determined by his karma. Therefore, Yājñavalkya, in teaching King Janaka, explains, as he does in Maitreyī's instruction, that whoever sees plurality in this world goes from death to death and that one should look for unity in the eternal self, the ātman (Brh. 4.4.19-20). Knowing this self the ancient sages lost interest in having children and worldly property and preferred to become mendicants. Only he who knows the indescribable[6] ātman cannot be overcome by anything; however, he himself can overcome his own good and bad deeds, as well as what he has not done (4.4.22). These words advocate the possibility and desirability of liberation from this allegedly joyless world while still living in it (4.4.7, 4.4.11). Asceticism is mentioned again, but now it stands equalled or even surpassed by the diseases and sufferings of life which are considered as paramam tapas (5.11).

(a.3) Kena Upaniṣad

In this short Upaniṣad the knowledge of the brahman, which cannot be obtained by ordinary means, "which the knower does not know and the non-knower knows", simply appears in those "in whom it awakens", who then see it in every living being and who thus, leaving this mortal world, become immortal (2.11.12 [2.3-4][7]). The phenomenon of mystical revelation is more elaborately described by our next Upaniṣad.

---

(6) Sa esa neti nety ātmā. - "He however, the ātman, is not so, not so" (as Deussen suggests for Brh. 4.4.22 here and its parallels in 4.2.4; 4.5.15; 3.9.26. Cf. Phil.Ups., p. 147), or: "That Soul is not this, it is not that" (Hume, p. 143), or: "This Self is (that which has been described as) not this, not this" (Radhakrishnan, p. 279).

(7) Square brackets are used where Radhakrishnan's numbering differs from that of Deussen and Hume.

(b.1) Kathaka Upanisad

In this Upanisad, belonging to the second group, we find young Naciketas as the interlocutor in a conversation with Yama, the god of the dead. Having found that "those worlds are joyless" (1.3 [1.1.3]) to which "the unawakened who have no knowledge" may have to go, he urges Yama to tell him whether after death man is or is not (1.20). Upon meeting with Yama's reluctance to answer, the young man begins to emphasize the transience of pleasure, the shortness of life and the vanity of riches to stress his desire for enlightenment about the question of immortality (1.26-29). Moved by his eagerness, the god of the dead teaches him that those are fools who, entangled in this world, merely seek pleasure, since they are like blind men led by blind; hence they must remain under his rule (2.1-6). Naciketas is then told that intellectual reasoning cannot furnish the desired knowledge, which has to come through a teacher, such as Yama (2.9 [1.2.9]). Having surpassed both joy and sorrow (harsa-śokau) through self-contemplation (ādhyātma-yoga) (2.12), Naciketas asks for insight "beyond past and future" (anyatra bhūtāc ca bhavāc ca yat tat paśyasi tad vada) (2.14). Thereupon he learns that the self is immortal, and that essentially nobody can slay nor be slain (2.19).

Somewhat later we hear again - not as developed yet as in the later doctrine of māyā - that plurality does not exist and that whoever believes in it continues going from death to death (Kāth. 4.11 = Brh. 4.4.19); but when all passions die down (something that can be achieved through a steady control of the senses by means of yoga: 3.10-13 [1.3.10-13]; 6.6-13 [2.3.6-13]) and "when all the knots that fetter the heart are cut asunder" [2.3.15] , then immortality, the brahman, can be reached here on earth (Kāth. 6.14 = Brh. 4.4.7). Schopenhauer repeatedly quotes this metaphor ("finditur nodus cordis..."; Śaṅkara, p. 265) in support of his views on negation and resignation (pp. 59, 71). A literal basis for the Latinized wording can be found in Mundaka Upanisad 2.2.8[9]: "The knot of the heart (hṛdaya-granthi) is cut, all doubts are dispelled and his deeds terminate, when He is seen - the higher and the lower." (We find similar descriptions regarding immortality and liberation in Mund. 3.2.9 and Chānd. 7.26.2; also in Śvet. as mentioned below.)

(b.2) Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

The apparent plurality of this world (prakṛti) is now clearly described as an illusion (māyā) created by the brahman acting as a magician (māyin, māyāvin). Man is entangled in this world of illusion which is penetrated by the brahman (4.9-10).[8] However, the knowledge of the brahman brings about complete cessation of māyā (viśva-māyā-nivṛtti), the cessation of birth and death (janma-mṛtyu-prahāṇi) (1.8-11), and one becomes freed of all fetters (mucyate sarva-pāśaiḥ) (2.15; 4.16; 5.13; 6.13).

(c) Maitrāyaṇa Upaniṣad

This later Upaniṣad, representing our third group, tells of King Bṛhadratha who has become a forest ascetic. Searching for an explanation about the ātman, he turns to the sage Śākāyāṇa who, however, tries to brush the problem aside as old-fashioned (1.2). Finally, the king's persistent enumeration of the shortcomings and evils of the human body and the world including death and rebirth convinces the sage that he is worthy of receiving instruction.[9] The Upaniṣad also teaches that liberation from karma, māyā and the other problems of the world can be obtained through knowledge, asceticism and meditation, but only on the basis of the study of the Vedas, the observation of one's cast duties and the consequent adherence to the āśramas (4.3-4).

Here the older spiritual attitude towards liberation becomes eclipsed by a rather social one. It seems that by ranking renunciation, including asceticism and yoga, as an official practice, the social order now wants to profit from an established spiritual ideal. Liberation becomes institutionalized - and with it the idea that the empirical world must be overcome. Yoga, recommended again, is now presented as a developed technique (including breathing and various stages of

(8) Deussen (S.Ups., p. 302) suggests that this could be the earliest occurrence of the concept of māyā.

(9) Deussen (S.Ups., p. 315) feels that such explicit expression of pessimism reflects the completion of the Sāṃkhya doctrine and, as emphasized by the unpopular ātman, the rise of Buddhism (cf. our p. 111).

thought control) (6.18-30). This belief in systematic liberation runs quite contrary to the spontaneity which we could observe at an earlier phase when the inner awakening was considered a grace of the ātman (Kena 2.13 and especially Kāth. 2.23).

Our final examples, drawn from two branches of the latest and somewhat diversified fourth group, shall illustrate the further development of ascetic specialization.

(d.1) Kṣurikā Upaniṣad

This so-called Yoga Upaniṣad has been appropriately named after the word kṣura, knife, suggesting the manner in which manas, the mind, should now be handled in order to separate and free the spirit forever from the body. We find a quasi-anatomical description of the mental method (dhāraṇā) to which the mentioned systematization of yoga has led: observing the proper posture and breath control (2-5) the yogin severs himself from his own body stepwise from the feet upwards (6-19) with the aim of attaining freedom from saṃsāra (20-25; also Amṛtubindu Up. 38, Yogaśikhā Up. 7, 10).

(d.2) Sannyāsa and Kaṇṭhaśruti Upaniṣads

These two so-called Sannyāsa Upaniṣads describe how, as an alternative to the yogin's psychological and physical methods, the ascetic (saṃnyāsin) chooses social separation and loneliness. Shuddering at the thought of rebirth, he shuns all pleasure and kills all sensuality in himself, striving for freedom from suffering (Sann. 2.7-9; 4.5). Another description suggests that he may also "go on his great journey" by starving himself to death, drowning or burning himself, or seeking another heroic form of death (Kaṇṭh. 4).

At this stage it makes essentially little difference whether the renouncer commits suicide, performs asceticism, uses yoga techniques or expresses his pessimistic attitude towards life in some traditional philosophical manner.

(2) Meta-pessimism: attitude and concept

Bearing in mind that we had selected our Upaniṣads with a conscious prejudice, namely, with a view to their potential to display some kind of pessimistic attitude towards life, we can now indicate a meta-philosophical change (a belief in an essential change from non-knowing to knowing), apart from the historical change (the evolvement of a tradition centred on the former change). Our first group of Upaniṣads introduces the meta-philosophical change as an inner Awakening, the seeing of the ātman, which is equated with a cosmic journey to the brahman. In group two, as this general cosmological view of a journey to the ātman within, we witness how a tradition of comments begins to evolve. We learn that a teacher may be of help, but the knowledge as such must reveal itself, thereby producing an inner attitude of renunciation and detachment from māyā. In group three this this attitude becomes more overt, with the emphasis on such aspects as suffering, māyā or liberation; yoga and asceticism are socially defined and integrated. The last group adds examples of intensive psycho-physical and socio-sensual expressions of a pessimistic attitude.

The Germans tend to misinterprete this attitude. To them something like the Indian fear of rebirth understandably but wrongly suggests metaphysical (existential, ethical) pessimism, because they are not aware of the non-metaphysical, behavioural character of the Indian attitude of pessimism. It is this attitude which, as our examples illustrate, is increasingly stressed by reference to liberation from plurality, from karma, and later from māyā through meditation, asceticism, even suffering, while reference to the Awakening, the knowledge of the brahman, is centred on some neutral experience. From a meta-philosophical point of view this experience, may it be sudden or slow, occurs as a primary impulse in the course of a "willed" connection with an existing potential of "thinking", of which the Upaniṣadic texts appear to be manifestations. Thus, when they reveal that the brahman desired plurality (with all its consequences such as suffering), they implicitly refer back to the knower's essential brahman identity, whereas Schopenhauer's will,

through the light of the intellect, strives for and establishes a connection between its (cultural) manifestation and its necessary self-negation. The Upanisads comment on and refer to a liberation from superficial, fallacious identity; Schopenhauer seeks annihilation of a fundamentally bad identity. While he advocates putting an end to becoming and being in and like this horrible world, the Upanisadic sage behaves horrified by what in practice contrasts his true all-embracing being.

If we look at both the Indian attitude of pessimism and the German metaphysical concept of pessimism as two constituents of some form of meta-pessimism describable in terms of change, we can compare them. The German metaphysical concept of pessimism includes a reaction against the development of thinking as an expression of culture, i.e., the Germans respond to some manner of thinking which they want to change. Schopenhauer responds to Hegel, Kant, Plato and, in a very similar manner, to Indian thought with the intention of improving on all. Deussen, noticing some historical development in Indian thought, nevertheless treats it very much like an extension of the equally undiscriminated Greek and European histories of philosophy. (Apparently prompted by his Indian knowledge, he even tends to exempt Schopenhauer's "will" from the principal negation of the "world".) Spengler and Gebser appreciate history in Indian thought as part of their physiognomical views on culture, both using their own culture-specific categories of "thought". (But neither of them sees in India the distinctly independent tradition: Spengler links German metaphysics with India through morphological analogy, Gebser connects through polar correspondence.) While the philosophical categories of our German thinkers form part of this reaction against their own culture (in which they include their personal views on Indian philosophy), the categories of Indian philosophy do not originate from culture; rather, certain attitudes in Indian culture have their formal orientation points in its philosophical tradition. The Indian pessimistic attitude results from a culture-specific (i.e. typically Indian) need to explain, in accordance with certain

fundamental philosophical principles, the phenomenon of mystical transformation or change. The German metaphysical concept of pessimism indicates a response to culture inasmuch as it is part of an intention to improve traditional ways of seeing and thinking, i.e., to effect some essential change in the history of philosophy.

The neglecting of this historical aspect of thought and the unawareness of those different forms of reaction towards culture are what led the Germans to refer to Indian thought in support of their own explicit or implicit metaphysical pessimism. Describing this crucial incompatibility in terms of meta-pessimism, we may say that cultural dissatisfaction is reflected by an intention to either, as in the case of our Germans, change thought and knowledge by understanding the world philosophically, or, as in the case of India, change not thought, not culture, not the world, but one's level of consciousness or understanding - which is not philosophical at all, though it may entail philosophical comments.

(C) The Bhagavadgītā

There is nothing officially secret or exclusive about the Bhagavadgītā (possibly fifth century B.C., with subsequent adaptations). This popular epic text - "remembered" (smṛti), not "revealed" (śruti) - is directed to all, including "women, Vaiśyas, as well as Śūdras" (9.32). The Indian textual distinction between śruti and smṛti appears as merely formal from a meta-philosophical point of view; we assume that the principles of the pessimistic attitude exposed in the Upaniṣads also pertain to the Bhagavadgītā, which follows some of the Upaniṣadic thoughts and descriptions quite closely.

(1) Popular pessimism

In contradistinction to our German thinkers we hold that, meta-philosophically speaking, the problem of the Indian personality change is expressed through a distinct attitude towards life correlated with a belief in pre-existing knowledge; analogously personality change in the German views is promoted philosophically according to a category of individuality in pursuit of some cultural identity. Schopenhauer, as we may recall, feels that the Bhagavadgītā advises us - in perfect accordance with his own view - to consider the whole and not the part (i.e. the individual) in order to also understand death and suffering as a product of "maya", his principle of individuation. With this knowledge such partial optimists as Arjuna, too, could calmly accept the painful nature of life (p. 56). Bharati, the mystic, considers "the non-mystical pep talk of the Bhagavadgītā" as depressing, because he understands it as an attempt to abolish the individual in favour of the divine (p. 190). Gebser differentiates very well physiognomically, especially with regard to his observations about clannishness (mamakāra), anger (krodha) and extinction (nirvāṇa), but philosophically he treats everything in accordance with his European category of individuality (p. 156).

The fundamental role of kinship relations in the Bhagavadgītā is introduced through King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's question about the war between

his relatives: "My people (māmakāḥ), what did they do?"[1] The kinship theme is then developed as part of Arjuna's "pessimistic" argument. On the eve of the battle he expresses his anguish by describing to Kṛṣṇa the probable fate of his kinsmen (svabāndhava, 1.28; svajana, 1.37). He foresees how their being slain would result in a line of detrimental consequences, especially for the families (kula), the family women (kula striyāḥ), the social class order (varṇa) and the ancestors (pitaraḥ), including the danger of having to live in hell for an unknown time (narake'niyatam) (1.37-44). In view of this near disaster his mind is overwhelmed by sorrow (śokasamvignamānasaḥ) (1.47). In principle, Gebser's idea that the individual has to face some time-ocean (here negative as naraka) seems to receive some physiognomic support from this kind of description. Once his wrong category of individuality is being applied, his metaphysical error may thrive on such aspects as the following. Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna that never was there a time when he was not nor a time when we all shall cease to be (2.12), that there is no slaying or being slain, no being born or dying at any time, and that man, through his self, is eternal (2.19-25) (compare p. 202, Kāth. 2.19).

Through yoga, we hear, the wise reach the sorrowless state (padam anāmayam, 2.51). Equally, he who, in the midst of sorrow (duḥkheṣu), is free (quiet) from attachment (passion), fear and anger (vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ) is called a sage (muni) (2.56). From attachment (saṅga) comes desire (kāma) and from desire comes anger (krodha). From anger eventually comes the destruction of intelligence (buddhi nāśa) and from this he perishes. But with the senses under control and free from attachment he achieves the destruction of all sorrows (duḥkha) (2.62-65). Having abandoned all desires (kāma) and when neither mine-ness nor selfishness (nirmamo nirahamkaraḥ) is left, oneness with the brahman can be attained (brahmanirvāṇa) (2.71-72). The true yogin seeks solitude, and, liberated from desire and sorrows (6.10,17,18), he beholds the Self through the self (ātmanātmānam) (6.20). Kṛṣṇa describes this aim as the knowledge of his own divine nature, which also ends

---

(1) Radhakrishnan (Bhg., p. 81) adds that māmakāḥ reflects an attitude of mamakāra or selfishness, a variant of ahamkāra or egoism.

rebirth. Delivered from passion, fear and anger (vītarāgabhayakrodhah), many have attained his state of being (4.9-10); they do not go back to rebirth (punarjanman), the place of sorrow (duhkhālaya) (8.15). Krsna refers to himself as both immortality and death, both being and non-being (9.19); also as world-destroying time (11.32).

Gebser, obviously, could not ignore this Indian inclination towards renunciation based on some spiritual or physical detachment and some cavelike withdrawal (5.28; 6.10), and with the aim of liberation in terms of a supreme nirvāna (6.15), or of union with God (brahmabhūta) (6.27). He treats this Indian endeavour to master the detachment from such passions as anger as a polar complement of his other discovery of a Greek-European "directed anger" (μῆνιν , p. 157(27)); he also sees this complementary relationship between the we-oriented clannishness (as illustrated above) and the ego-oriented Western individualism. It is such phenomena as this clannishness or (non-directed) anger (krodha) which, in his opinion, demonstrate that Indian thought centres on certain pre-individualistic principles of cosmic return or extinction.

Our meta-view accomodates Gebser's descriptions for their physiognomical value, which it allows to expose the fact that philosophically he treats their German, not their Indian, essence. The Upanisadic element in the Bhagavadgītā points to the mystical axis along which the textual manifestations of philosophical thought are developed. Arjuna's pessimistic reaction to the prospects of destruction and suffering, complemented by Krsna's suggestions for how to accept it all by adapting one's attitude to a more detached outlook (i.e., do act, but abandon all attachment to success or failure; 2.47-48; again in ch. 4), expresses pessimism on a social-physionomical level. Krsna's adaptive suggestions modify this pessimism on the same level by moving, in principle, from sorrow to renunciation.

His renunciation by way of action (karma yoga) implies that not so much what we do, but how we act, matters: we should control our senses and remain detached from the short-lived results of our action. Otherwise we might become misled into further undesirable reactions to these results (3.4-7). Referring to Sāmkhya thought, he elaborates that egoism (ahamkāra) prevents a man from understanding that it is

not he who is the actual doer (kartṛ), but that actions (karma) are essentially performed by the modes (guṇa) of nature (prakṛti). Knowing that it all happens between those qualities (guṇā guneṣu), one stays unattached (na sajjate) (3.27-28). The enemy (vairiṇa) in the form of desire (kāma) and anger (krodha) prevents man from raising his consciousness from the senses (indriya) to the mind (manas) and the intellect (buddhi), and, further, to seeing that he, essentially is above all (3.37-43). The ideal of Sāṃkhya is described as indifference to sense objects, absence of egoism, and the perception of evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain (13.8). Liberation is attained through the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman (param brahman) which is beginningless and neither existent nor non-existent (13.12; compare 9.19: being is non-being). Equally, it is attained by knowing that both prakṛti and puruṣa are beginningless, that prakṛti produces body and senses, and that puruṣa experiences pleasure and pain. The Supreme Puruṣa is also called the Supreme Self (param ātma) (13.19-23).

Arjuna, asking which of the two recommended paths would be the better one, is told by Kṛṣṇa that both lead to the same goal, but that unselfish actions (karma yoga) are better than their renunciation (saṃnyāsa) in accordance with Sāṃkhya (5.1-5). Working with body, mind and senses, the yogin remains unattached (5.11-12). The happy man is the one who is capable of resisting the impulse originating from desire and anger (kāma krodhodbhavaṃ vegaṃ) (5.23).

Finally, the emphasis is put again on non-attachment to the fruits of actions (18.10-11). Thus, even the act of slaying is essentially no slaying (18.17; also 9.30: moral conduct is irrelevant; also see Bharati, p. 188(18)). Clear understanding produces happiness (sukha) which is like poison at first and like nectar in the end (18.37). Having overcome egoism (ahaṃkāra), desire (kāma) and anger (krodha), and without mine-ness (nirmama), one is ready to become brahman (18.53).

(2) Meta-pessimism: a problem of belief

Meta-philosophically speaking, the "ontological" background of the Bhagavadgītā, as it is essentially provided by the Upaniṣads, Vedānta and Sāṃkhya, shows no sign of pessimism. Meta-ontologically, Kṛṣṇa is

beyond the pale of both pessimism and optimism. However, by his objective discursive manner of teaching Arjuna how to die, he principally indicates a pessimistic attitude, dramatically reflected by Arjuna's behaviour.

From Schopenhauer onwards this attitude of pessimism has been interpreted with wrong ontological implications. Furthermore, Arjuna's apparent pessimism is by no means the result of some metaphysical search for identity based on a cultural perspective. It rather refers to the problem of the "willing" of understanding.(2) Schopenhauer, equating individual existence, through "maya", with suffering and death, pursues a form of ontological negation which can still be felt in Gebser's, or even Bharati's, ideas of a dissolution of the individual in a time-ocean or in a divine Self. Gebser and Bharati presume some European category of individuality for their criticisms of Indian thought. In Schopenhauer's case we can say that his entire conception of Vorstellung (including "maya", "karma", reincarnation etc.) is not treated in an Indian manner according to which it should be considered on relative "levels". Schopenhauer never discriminated imagination as such from that of the people in general, i.e. objectively and subjectively. But in India, where any actual differentiation between subjective and objective aspects would philosophically be irrelevant, we have something like different "levels" of māyā (illusion or imagination included), right up to "seeing" or "knowing" (as marked by the level of the revealed "text"). Kṛṣṇa's Sāṁkhya argument illustrates that the pessimistic attitude is didactically connected with the fact that certain levels of consciousness or perception, such as Arjuna's, may be relatively low. It is his seeing rather than what he sees that is bad. In the Bhagavadgītā social values are derived from non-social ones. Arjuna revolting against destruction is a pessimist on what may appear as social (cultural) grounds because, in view of the efficient level of māyā, he does not yet understand and believe the true nature of the ātman.

(2) Radhakrishnan (Bhg., p. 237, 9.1) reminds us of the technical difference between the understanding of the seer (jñāna) and that of the philosopher (vijñāna).

Chapter Seven

Buddhism: existence means suffering

More than any other representative form of thought which has originated in India, it is Buddhism which in the West has been associated with pessimism. Within the group of our German thinkers the interpretations of the alleged pessimism ranged from Schopenhauer's world negation, von Hartmann's existential indifferentism, Mainländer's existential consummation, Deussen's moral exhaustion and Spengler's dialectical culture annihilation to Gebser's cosmic resorption. Since pessimism, as we decided, is a very cultural phenomenon, we intend to concentrate on what the historical role of the Buddha (presumably 563 - 483 B.C.) may reveal in this regard. Availing ourselves of André Bareau's critical presentation of the Buddha's "biography", we shall try to trace a meta-pessimistic development in Buddhism during that phase in which the various biographical accounts were originally collected. This biography of the Buddha represents for us a formal core of Buddhism, without any of its later detailed developments, which is adequate for both a presentation of the principal Buddhist parallels required for our comparision, and for the location of the reference points for Buddhist concepts borrowed and adapted by our Germans. We shall try to assess their compatibility by following some of the lines of interaction within the meta-sphere of pessimism.

(1) A meta-view of the cultural background

Facing the Buddhist tradition as a whole, it is necessary that we raise the question of its possible cultural background. We say "possible" because it strikes us as noteworthy that in Buddhism we find neither a doctrinal nor a cultural connection with some explicit form of Indianness or some other ethnic background (compare p. 16(20)). Practically, of course, it must have drawn on some form of a culture matrix, although such a thing was never reflected by it, as we shall see more clearly below. While, for instance, Hellenism in terms of culture already had a distinct meaning for the ancient Greeks themselves, Indian culture can only be considered as objectively possible, i.e., as something we may discuss from outside. Doctrinally as well as metaphysically the inner, subjective cultural aspect was totally ignored, even though from an outsider's point of view it could have been activated and applied. We must take this into account in order to secure this essential cultural aspect for the historical exploration of the potential philosophical interaction between our different traditions. Even if we look at Buddhism as a religion (as distinct from philosophy), we cannot describe it as essentially or typically Indian inasmuch as its Indian connections or elements never determined its character. In no regard were they relevant to Buddhism. (We know of no place in the Pāli canon where a Buddhist ever referred to himself as an Indian or a Sakya or a Magadhan.) Since Buddhism did not link up subjectively with its cultural background, we may refer to it as a-cultural, inferring that culture in Buddhist religion can only be discussed in its objective aspect.

When tracing this principal a-culturality into the religious realm of Buddhism, we must be aware of a rhetorical factor which implies a transgression, or at least transcendence, of cultural boundaries, regardless of the fact that as a religion it was created on some cultural basis. This rhetorical factor stresses some intercultural aspect existing in all great religions such as Buddhism (and even more so Christianity) in whatever conventional form they may locally appear. From one angle, which is completely doctrinal, not cultural,

we notice a claim for universality. The other angle, providing a cultural view, suggests that we look at Buddhism (or Christianity) as a non-culture-specific religion. Both perspectives lead up to the same thing, but from different angles. (What was laid down doctrinally might also be asserted culturally by for instance a very cultured person.) The second, the cultural, angle contains two aspects which help to expose the cultural rhetoric: no matter whether we express the intercultural aspect by being "culturally above" the need to couch our view in some conventional, perhaps national, manner, or whether we say it with some conventional cultural attachment to the idea, we notice that again we are saying essentially the same thing, but using two rhetorically different routes of claiming some intercultural, non-culture-specific nature of Buddhism.

While our meta-position allows us to consider Buddhism as a-cultural (not culture-conscious), it makes it plain that our own cultural view, including its predeterminedness by a certain cultural perspective and due to some specific culture-mindeness, disqualifies us for following the Buddhist path in practice, whatever rhetoric we use. (In other words, Buddhism in its non-Indian capacity may well be open to members from outside India, and yet those with Western outlooks are naturally excluded due to this culture factor in their own original background.[1] While, for example, the Christian form of the claim of universality is culture-derived, Buddhism this claim is a-cultural.)

Objectively the Buddha reacted against culture in general, perhaps even against Brahmanical or Jainist culture.[2] Trying to see Buddhism against a Brahmanical background or as an offshoot of

---

(1) In the case of Bharati's claimed Hindu identity the problem was somewhat reversed. Hinduism, which originated half a millennium later than Buddhism, had to be considered impenetrable due its <u>own</u> inextricable and non-imitable connections with its (objective) cultural fundamentals.

(2) Mrs. Rhys Davids (<u>Manual</u>, p. 87) sees the Buddha as clarifying and expanding "the progressive movement among the brahmans".

Brahmanism might possibly lead to insights about its cultural origin. But, disregarding any evolutionist approach towards the history of Buddhism within our limited context, we prefer to behave as if there were no original connection with Brahmanism or at least nothing which could turn this possibility into a crucial factor concerning our problem. Also we do not know of any definite reference to Brahmanical texts in Buddhism. The first biographical episode referred to below sustains this view of doctrinal autonomy. There is no proof, though. Canonical Buddhism may well have had its independent origin, yet draw elements from general Indian thought, as well as from more specifically pre-canonical, or proto-canonical[3] sources, into the development of its own tradition within the Indian tradition. Regarding the possibility of its relative philosophical independence, we should not forget that philosophy in India is in principle quite isolationistic.[4] While, for instance, in ancient Greece different philosophers would in general have known about one another and referred to each other's thought, in India something like a "one-man school", or equally a "one-school man", would have been quite thinkable.

Not implying any complete cultural isolation, we must still be aware of a relative isolation in the tradition of the Buddhist or Brahmanical concepts of nirvāṇa; although they are both Indian in

---

(3) Ruegg (Study, p. 11(15)) suggests to replace the terms pre-canonical by proto-canonical for Buddhism reconstructed after the old Āgamic canons, considering its implication of an identity with the original doctrine a moot point.

(4) Ruegg (Study, p. 40) remarks: "At the same time it does not seem overhasty to say in general that Buddhism and the other religions and philosophies of India including of course Jainism cannot be regarded as altogether separate bodies living in hermetically sealed compartments: they spring from either related or identical backgrounds, touch upon problems that were of common concern, and very frequently employ similar philosophical methods and practical techniques." According to von Glasenapp (Ved.u.Buddh., p. 1014(=4) "Vedānta and Buddhism existed so long side by side that, understandably, they have influenced each other".

origin, we cannot equate them on that basis. In Buddhism nirvāṇa is first of all a state of consciousness (see p. 254(73)), while, as we have seen, in Brahmanism-Hinduism it is, expressed in terms of mukti, the consummation of an ultimate identity of the ātman with the brahman (pp. 209-210). In addition, Buddhism proceeding sometimes in a very a-conceptual manner, can also be very conceptual and formal. Thus, the Buddha would have said that the brahman existed, perhaps, but that he could not find it (compare ātman, p. 240).(5) While for the Buddhists such a statement must have meant a lot, it would not have meant much to the Brahmans. From our point of view it indicates a cultural reaction or something which could have been turned into one.

In no direction do we find a genuine cultural reaction in India. We rather notice a prominent constant aim to neutralize culture by means of a certain detachment from it in connection with the control of responses to it. If from a traditional Western point of view the Indian behaviour may appear as if they had forgotten culture, in our meta-view it simply means that culture is not a concept of theirs. Asking ourselves what if not culture may have prompted the Buddha to start Buddhism, it may be sufficient to assume, within the context of this study, that the Buddha started to teach because it lay in the nature of the things he had seen and discovered that they should be taught, and that on this basis his impulse was perpetuated. By no means could we ever point to any clear cultural reaction in Buddhism. The fact that the Buddha taught was included directly in the dogmatic framework of Buddhism, as becomes apparent from the "biography". The Buddha is essentially conceived of as the Teacher, as compared for example with Yājñavalkya who, amongst other things, also taught. Comparing the Upaniṣadic ṛṣis with the Buddha, we could say that his function is essentially that of the Teacher and not that of a teacher,

(5) Frauwallner (Phil.Buddh., pp. 9, 18) reminds us of the Buddha's apparent reluctance to expound philosophical problems of no direct importance to his way of salvation, notably with regard to questions about "soul" and "afterlife". Von Glasenapp (Buddh.u.Gottes., p. 37) emphasizes that there is no evidence for any "theism" in the Buddha's outlook.

implying that his doctrine should be interpreted as representing the Teaching.

This a-cultural, culture-free, absoluteness in Buddhism qualifies it as not typically Indian. However, pessimism, unlike such concepts as, for instance, solipsism or reality or suffering, cannot be treated outside of a given cultural context, although it may be presented, as von Hartmann shows, as if it was purely the outcome of metaphysical ratiocinations, disregarding the negative cultural reaction at the basis. When we say culture, we are necessarily referring to cultural reflections or cultural attitudes, not just to static cultural objects. These reflections or attitudes are negative by nature, inasmuch as they contain a reaction on the culture level against some phenomenon with fixed negative attributes (for example, the barbaric realm outside culture as in ancient Greece, the inner individual cultural opponent as in Schopenhauer's case, or some immanent cultural negativity as in Spengler's civilization). While for the Schopenhauerians pessimism was the idea, determined by their cultural attitude, Buddhism, as we wish to show, treats the negative criteria relevant to its doctrine in a manner which is psychologically positive and culturally neutral. The doctrine-centred, culture-free interpretation of suffering (duhkha) may even entail happiness (sukha dharma) for the successful monk. From our meta-level we see that it is our own attitude which makes the difference in the interpretation of the Buddha's thought.

In canonical literature references to the Buddha as a person are common. However, the numerous incongruities encountered by the student of the original Buddhist source documents make it impossible to simply draw up a straightforward, clear biography of the Buddha, as Bareau states in his introduction. While some scholars have tried to follow their personal choice of what appeared as the most likely pieces of evidence to them, others, he adds, have ended up disputing the Buddha's historical reality altogether. Nevertheless, he feels that a restriced study of the source should make it possible to establish some form of valid biography of the

Buddha.[6] Notwithstanding his selection of Pāli, Sanskrit and Chinese texts (which partly correspond closely with one another or provide different versions of the same story), Bareau does not assume that any of the schools which produced these texts gave rise to the Buddha's biography as such. "Far from thinking so, we rather believe that it developed gradually in a mixed and predominantly lay environment which featured no sect in particular, and spread notably thanks to the pilgrimages well before its first elements were incorporated in the various canonical collections in different epochs."[7] Regarding the historical qualities of the traditional biography as it is contained in the Sutrapitaka and the Vinayapitaka, considered the most ancient Buddhist texts, Bareau finally comes to the conclusion that "the examination of our sources of documentation shows that the fragments of the biography which they contain are themselves composed of episodes, at first isolated, which are being borrowed and invented according to necessity without worrying too much about their chronological relations nor the gaps which separate them".[8] He says that a small number of very old doctrinal elements and some ancient traditions which may have been based on exact memories provided a practical biographical core.[9] To this were added diversified accounts either derived from it or shaped with a view to preaching or borrowed from older folkloristic stories with the aim of exalting the personality of the Buddha. Furthermore, he

---

(6) André Bareau's lucid Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapitaka et les Vinayapitaka anciens are based on a selection of some of the oldest and most significant biographical episodes, comparing equivalent texts from different schools and assessing them according to their relative chronology. The unbiased accuracy with which this part of the Buddhist tradition is presented by him makes it immediately accessible for our own comparative purposes.

(7) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 9.

(8) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 373.

(9) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 399.

considers this biography as almost entirely legendary, its various parts having originated mainly in the interest of the actual Buddhist doctrine. The sage Buddha, as he points out, teaches a doctrine which becomes increasingly complex and more precise while he himself becomes more and more a super-human with extraordinary powers, omniscient, and superior to all gods and all people. Finally, the Buddha himself becomes a god, and Hinduism contributes a considerable part towards some Buddhist theology.

(2) Selected biographical episodes

(a) In search of the Awakening

The first in Bareau's selection of episodes takes us back to a time when the Buddha was still a disciple himself. According to one[10] source (Theravādin, Sutta) the Buddha's critical attitude towards traditional knowledge can be summed up very briefly. Having practised the pure conduct (brahmacariya) in accordance with the doctrine and discipline (dhammavinaya) of his teacher (here: Ālāra Kālāma), and having mastered it all, he concludes with dissatisfaction: "This doctrine neither leads to disgust, not to detachment, not to cessation, not to appeasement, not to supernatural knowledge, not to complete Awakening, nor to Extinction, but only to rebirth in the domaine of nothingness."[11]

In a similar account (Sarvāstivādin, Sūtra) we are again told that having found a teacher (here: Ārāda Kālāma) for practising the pure conduct (brahmacarya) according to the doctrine (dharma), the future Buddha soon discovers that he possesses himself the necessary belief (śraddhā), energy (vīrya) and wisdom (prajñā), and that therefore here is nothing left for him to be learnt. "This doctrine does not lead to knowledge (jñāna), it does not lead to Awakening (bodhi), it

---

(10) For this episode we have used three versions to better illustrate the traditional claim of doctrinal autonomy. However, as a rule we restrict ourselves to one or two suitable accounts from the choice of sources offered by Bareau.

(11) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 13-14.

does not lead to Extinction (nirvāna). It is therefore better that from now on I abandon this doctrine and that I search again for the absence of disease, supreme appeasement, Extinction, that I search again for the absence of old age (ajarā), the absence of death (amarana), the absence of sorrow and sadness, the absence of defilement, the supreme appeasement, Extinction."(12)

In another version (Dharmaguptaka, Vinaya) his teacher (Ārāda Kālāma) is actually lacking the mentioned qualities; however, the Bodhisattva finds them in himself. In addition he realizes that "this meditation of the domain of nothingness neither means the end, nor detachment, nor cessation, nor rest, nor the complete and perfect Awakening (samyaksambodhi), nor religious life (śrāmanya), nor the place where one obtains the definite appeasement of Extinction (nirvāna)". Bareau comments that there is no certainty as to whether this teacher Ārāda Kālāma(13) was actually a historic figure, hence "we do not know if he really taught the meditation of the domain of nothingness, if he was the Bodhisattva's teacher, or if the mentioned practice was introduced into the Buddhist doctrine by the Buddha himself or by one of his disciples after his last death".

These indications and descriptions of the Buddha's superiority over his master cannot prove any independent origin of the Buddhist doctrine, but they clearly document an isolationistic tendency of the kind noted above (p. 216). As Bareau suggests, they were necessary from a Buddhist point of view, to demonstrate and to declare that his doctrine owed nothing essential to the thought of his predecessors and that he had well discovered it himself at the moment of his Awakening, a point which became one of the major dogmas of Buddhism.(14)

---

(12) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 15.

(13) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 15-17. In two accounts (Theravādin and Sarvāstivādin) the Buddha's second teacher is Udraka Rāmaputra (Uddaka Rāmaputta); in a third account (Dharmaguptaka) Udraka appears as the teacher of his own master's (Rāma's) disciples (pp. 23-26).

(14) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 20.

After these introductory parts shown as serving the claim of doctrinal autonomy, Bareau presents several accounts of various episodes which, as he sees it, practically aim at vanquishing the fears of the forest hermit.(15) This aspect explicitly features one account (Theravādin, Sutta). Referring back to the time before his complete Awakening, the Buddha, well aware of the problems of solitude, remarks that the forest may ravish the spirit of those who do not achieve the necessary concentration (samādhi). "Monks and Brahmans who are avid, concupiscent, subject to violent passions...call in fear and terror." Being aware of the absence of any avidity in himself, he explains, he always felt confident about staying in the forest.(16)

The next account lays the emphasis more on the problem of desire (Theravādin, Sutta). "The monks or Brahmans who stay (there) without having completely cleared themselves of desires (kama) with the help of their bodies (kāya), because whatever is with them in the place of desires - the will of desire, the attachement to desire, the numbness of desire, the thirst of desire, the fever of desire - all this is not well appeased...they are, therefore, incapable of knowledge, vision and complete supreme Awakening."(17)

Regarding the practice of asceticism, one account (Theravādin, Sutta) mentions the Buddha's telling how he meditated including breath control, and another account (Dharmaguptaka, Vinaya) adds that by means of his strength (bala) and energy (vīrya) he developed the knowledge of drying up the source of sufferings, since not through desire can this happiness (sukha dharma) be attained.(18)

Finally, we hear how the Buddha abandons his asceticism (Dharmaguptaka, Vinaya). He realizes that through austerities he cannot force his way to happiness (sukha dharma). Giving up fasting, he is

---

(15) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 361.

(16) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 33.

(17) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 42.

(18) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 45, 48.

considered as having returned to softness, abundance and stupidity by those who insist on practising physical asceticism.(19)

(b) Before the Awakening

Moving biographically one step nearer to the Awakening, we learn of the importance of the vanquishing of evil thought (Theravādin, Sutta). The Buddha explains to his monks how, before his complete Awakening, he had realized that when the reasoning of desire (kāma) arose in him it did, in fact, cause self-torment and the torment of others instead of leading to Extinction (nibbāna); hence, by his realizing this, it disappeared.(20)

In a parallel version of the same propaedeutic account (Sarvāstivādin, Sūtra) the Buddha adds more specifically that "such a monk who does not separate himself from the reflection of malevolence, who does not separate himself from the reflection of nuisance, consequently cannot liberate himself from birth, from old age, from disease, from death, from sadness, from sighs and tears, and cannot separate himself from all suffering either."(21)

As Bareau comments, this episode, concentrating on some method for overcoming desire and various other evils, may have been created as a sort of doctrinal prologue for a sermon describing the Bodhisattva's first meditation, and therefore placed right before the Awakening. The vanquishing of fear and evil thought could perhaps be looked upon as distinct parts of a didactically ordered series leading up to the account of the Four Meditations (dhyāna), and from there to that of the Threefold Knowledge (vidyā). Bareau refers to these four groups as preparatory stages "having no other purpose than to show the efficacy of these methods by making each of them the actual cause of the Awakening".(22) According to the Buddha's own description in one

(19) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 55.

(20) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 62.

(21) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 64.

(22) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 69, 361.

of the accounts of the Four Meditations (Theravādin, Sutta), his first meditation took place after he had begun to eat again (after his ascetic fast), resting in a state separated from desire (kāma), from bad things, without any reasoning or reflection, with joy (pīti) and happiness (sukha). A very pleasant sensation occurred in him without, however, taking over his thought completely. A similar second meditation followed after the appeasement of reasoning and reflection, consisting of inner serenity and unification of thought, and resulting from concentration (samādhi), but without the pleasure taking over his thought completely. A third meditation followed which, after detachment from joy, resulted in a feeling of happiness without, however, it taking over completely. Finally, having abandoned pleasure and pain, gaiety and sadness, he attained the fourth meditation, which was neither painful nor agreable, just perfect attention and indifference. Again, it was followed by a controlled pleasant sensation.(23)

These Four Meditations as they have been handed down through various analogous texts could, in Bareau's opinion, constitute one of the oldest, although not necessarily authentic, episodes of this biography. He finds it quite reasonable that the authors - or probably those of some more ancient texts by which they were inspired - decided to introduce them at this point in accordance with their own view of the origination of the Buddha's Awakening (bodhi). He reminds us that the practical preaching must have been more important to them than the historical side. What mattered was whether a certain story could attract the attention of their disciples to certain significant points in Buddhist teaching. Bareau feels quite in accordance with the ancient authors in assuming that the Buddha did have access to this method of concentrating and uniting his thought on one object in order to attain the psychological state necessary for the appearance of the Awakening so much sought.(24) The significance of this "psychological" aspect of the Awakening for our analysis of pessimism should reveal

---

(23) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 67.

(24) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 69-70.

itself more fully in connection with our metaphysical considerations at the end of this chapter.

(c) The Awakening

The important event of the actual Awakening has been recorded both in a shortened form and in connection with the three kinds of Knowledge, thus representing two separate traditions. In one of the shortened text versions (Theravādin, Sutta) the Buddha describes how, after having originally been subjected through himself to the law of birth, old age, disease, death, sorrow, defilements, he finally attained Extinction (nibbāna): "Unshakable is my deliverance, here is my last birth, henceforth there will not be any further existence."(25)

According to the longer account (Theravādin, Sutta) the Buddha acquires the Threefold Knowledge (vijyā) of his Awakening by making use of the qualities which he developed through the Four Meditations (jhāna). First, with his thought concentrated, perfectly pure, subtle, malleable, stable and immobile,(26) he remembers multiple former existences with all the details of his former conditions of life. Secondly, he sees that beings are reborn according to their actions, including rebirth in hell or in a heavenly world. Thirdly, thinking about the exhaustion of the impurities which lead to suffering , he sees the Four Noble Truths: "This is suffering (dukkha); this is the origin of suffering; this is the cessation of suffering; this is the path which leads to the cessation of suffering" (see p. 229). Likewise, he sees the impurities, their origin, cessation and the road to cessation. Having understood these things, his thought is delivered from the three impurities of desire, existence and ignorance. Thus delivered he pronounces again the final formula: "Exhausted is birth, practised is the pure conduct

---

(25) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 72, 80.

(26) Bareau (Biogr.I, p. 79) remarks that this enumeration specifies the qualities which allow the monk to acquire the Threefold Knowledge of the Awakening. Compare the Four Bases of Attention (smṛtyupasthāna), our pp. 234-235.

(brahmacariya), accomplished is the task, there will be no further existence down here."(27)

Bareau explains the role of the impurities with regard to the existence of suffering. "Suffering (duḥkha) is never defined as an impurity (āsrava) and its relation with the latter is never enounced with precision; it is therefore easy to deduce from the doctrine that suffering is a consequence of impurities in general since the desire, the existence and ignorance are denounced as being at the origin of suffering, the former because it is identical with thirst (tṛṣṇa), the two others because they are conditions (pratyaya) more or less distant from suffering in the chain of Dependent Origination (pratītyasamutpāda)."(28) Extinction, he continues, coinciding with the Awakening, is explicitly defined (in the shorter version, above) as being free of birth, old age, disease, death, grief and defilements. "Now, birth, old age, disease, death and grief will be considered later, especially in the sermon of Banāras, as principal variants of suffering; moreover, the shorter text puts them on the same level with defilements (saṃkleśa), an ambiguous term whose actual sense is that of suffering and torment, but which in the classical Buddhist vocabulary always denotes defilements and corruptions." Bareau considers this report of the Awakening - its different versions marking the evolution of the opinions of the learned Buddhists, "des docteurs bouddhiques" - to be a relatively late reconstruction of which his analysis reveals "le charactère imaginaire" which may have been a function of the requirements of teaching. "Hence, we cannot know how this capital discovery of the essence of Buddhism which is called the Awakening has happened."

(d) The discovery of the Law of Dependent Origination

Our chosen report (Mahīśāsaka, Vinaya) of the Buddha's discovery of the principle of Dependent Origination (pratītyasamutpāda) could be

(27) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 76; he adds, p. 81, that all schools reserve the knowledge of the exhaustion of impurities to the Arhants or the Buddhas.

(28) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 87.

considered an elaboration of the principles of the origination and cessation of suffering - without any cultural reference (see p. 231). It describes how, after his Awakening, the Buddha examines the twelve reasons (nidāna) of the Dependent Origination in either direction (anulomapratiloma). He finds that existence conditions existence and cessation conditions cessation, adding an explanation in twelve steps: conditioned by ignorance (avidyā) the compositions (saṃskāras) exist; conditioned in turn by these, there exist conscious discernment (vijñāna), hence name and form (nāmarūpa), the six sensual domains (sadāyatana - the sixth sense being thought; compare pp. 232-233), contact (sparśa), sensation (vedanā), thirst (tṛṣṇa), appropriation (upādānas, material causes of adherence to existence),[29] existence (bhava),[30] birth (jāti), and - representing the twelveth step as a group - the miseries of old age (jarā), death (marana), sorrow (śoka), sadness (daurmanasya), suffering (duhkha) and anguish (upāyāsa).

---

(29) Radhakrishnan (Phil.I, p. 444) describes the upādānas as a force of attraction which recombines the various scattered elements of life in accordance with karma, "an informing principle waiting for its material".

(30) Mrs. Rhys Davids (Gotama, p. 45) sggesting that regarding the concept of bhava, proto-Buddhism must have put the emphasis more on "becoming" than on "being", lets the Buddha speak: "I sought the coming to be (bhava), not the dying out; the waxing, the growth, not the waning, the ceasing; more-will rather than more-knowledge." The Buddha himself represents to her the potential More in Man (Manual, p. ix): "Here the More presupposes the real being-in-becoming of that very Man. If we blot out the very Man as unreal, then that More becomes just a serial bunch of ideas built up around a nonentity, or at best round a dummy man called "mind". Now in Indian religion the reality of the man was vital." Von Glasenapp (Ph.Ind., pp. 302-303) is more restrictive: "For this philosophy there is in the empirical world no being, but only an uninterrupted becoming; there is no firm ego and no firm things outside it, but only a continuously flowing stream of dharmas between which exist certain connections" (cf. our p. 242(56)).

According to Bareau, we may consider this report of the law of Dependent Origination as a product of a relatively recent period when the legend of the Buddha took shape and well after the development of the Four Noble Truths. He observes that, while the pratītyasamutpāda plays an almost equally important role as does the episode of the Four Noble Truths, the invention of which constituted the Awakening, it also takes its inspiration from there and is equally imaginatory. Besides, at a later stage the two elements appear in some combined form or substituting for one another. However, Bareau feels that the law of Dependent Origination itself must be ancient, perhaps even dating back to the time of the Buddha himself, and it may have been discovered at about the same time as the Four Noble Truths. As he points out, the terms featuring the list of the pratītyasamutpāda do not yet involve any of the great subsystems, such as the five skandhas (the meaning of saṃskāra as it appears above still being very different). On the whole, he sees in this account a kind of comment on the second and third truth.(31)

(e) The Turning of the Wheel of the Law

It says in the Dharmacakrapravartana-Sūtra (Mahīśāsaka, Vinaya) that the first sermon which sets the Wheel of the Law in motion is preached by the Buddha at Banāras to five monks who previously were his fellow-disciples. In a preceding episode (Mahīśāsaka), which Bareau considers essentially a prologue to that of the sermon, these five men had expressed their disapproval of the Buddha's abandonment of the path of austerities (see pp. 222-223, Dharmaguptaka), whereupon he let them know that he had accomplished Extinction (nirvāṇa), which they, too, could reach, including liberation from the five aggregates (skandha).(32) We shall refer later to the role of the skandhas in connection with "thirst" and "suffering".

In the actual sermon which follows (Mahīśāka, Vinaya), the Buddha mentions two extremes which should be avoided, and the Middle

(31) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 94-97.

(32) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 163, 165.

Path (madhyamā pratipadā) which should be followed instead, by those striving for nirvāna. He refers first to the hedonistic extreme of "the one who, being attached to desire and having thirst for sensual pleasures, preaches the absence of transgression (anāpatti) of sensual pleasures", then to the ascetic extreme of "the one who, having false opinions (mithyadrsti), torments his body without having any trace of the Path". Defining the madhyamā pradipadā as leading to seeing,[33] understanding and Awakening, he describes it as being constituted of eight corrections: namely, correct (samyañc) opinion (drsti), correct thinking (samkalpa), correct speech (vāk), correct activity (karmānta), correct livelihood (ājīva), correct effort (vyāyāma), correct attention (smrti),[34] and correct concentration (samādhi).[35]

Having described the Middle Path, the Buddha elaborates: "Besides, there are Four Noble Truths: the noble truth (ārya satya) of suffering (duhkha), the noble truth of the origin (samudaya) of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation (nirodha) of suffering, the noble truth of the path (pratipadā) which leads to the cessation of suffering. What is the noble truth of suffering? Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentations, anguish are suffering, union with what one dislikes is suffering, to lose what one desires is suffering; in short, the five aggregates (skandha)[36] of the appropriations (upādāna-s)[37] are

---

(33) Literally, "which causes the eye to be born", on which Bareau comments (p. 392) "it is called 'the appearance of the eye of the Law (dharmacaksus)', and this indicates that the conversion (of those who were about to become Arhants) was conceived as a sudden vision".

(34) Cf. the smrtyupasthāna, our p. 235.

(35) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 174.

(36) Frauwallner (Phil.Buddh., pp. 26-27) explains that the view of thirst as the source of suffering, as it is presented in this sermon, was later developed further: a distinction was introduced between thirst aroused by sense objects (kāmatrsnā), and thirst for becoming (bhavatrsnā), which was sustained by the erroneous belief in a personal

suffering; such is the noble truth of suffering." Concentrating on the latter, he explains the origin of suffering in terms of the thirst (trsna) for existence and the passions born with it. Consequently, the cessation of suffering (p. 225) would require the total abandonment and exhaustion of this thirst, which, in other words, would amount to nirvāna. This sermon presents the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering as the Middle Path, which is the Path of the Eight Corrections (the Noble Eightfold Path: ārya aṣṭāṅgika mārga). Bareau, hinting at the fact that the Four Noble Truths play a more complex role in this report of the Sermon of Benāras than in the above account of the Awakening (i.e. of the Threefold Knowledge), suggests that the more complex form may possibly be the derived and later one.(38)

Appreciating the great importance of the Four Noble Truths, "les docteurs des Theravādin et des Mūlasarvāstivādin", at a much later stage, let the Buddha concentrate on the theme of suffering again in one of the last sermons which represent his spiritual testament.(39) The Pāli version ends by also emphasizing the destruction of suffering: "As a natural consequence of the absence of seeing in accordance with the reality of the Four Noble Truths, the way one has to follow from birth to birth is a long one. They have been seen, the guide towards existence is suppressed, destroyed is the root of suffering, henceforth there is no rebirth any more."

---

ego (ātman), one of the main causes of rebirth. According to the Buddha this empirical form of personality reflects only some connection of mental and material configurations (dharma) constituting five groups (skandha): body (rūpa), feelings (vedanā), perception (saṃjñā), mental compositions (saṃskāra), and awareness (vijñāna). Frauwallner mentions a third way of delusion, the thirst for annihilation (vibhavatrsna), which was never developed philosophically.

(37) I.e., "the skandhas in so far as they are grasped at" (Conze, Thought, p. 35).

(38) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 181.

(39) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, p. 80.

(f) Suffering, transience and egolessness

The Buddhist doctrine links the Noble Truth of Suffering with two other fundamental principles, namely, the theories of transience and of egolessness (non-existence of a self). While the principle of transience may be considered as implied in the Doctrine of Dependent Origination (as shall be illustrated later), the principle of egolessness finds one of its clearest expressions in a short discourse between the Buddha and the five monks, which parallels the principle of the "Socratic method". In this account (Mahīśāsaka, Vinaya) the Buddha, recommending unified thought and abandonment of the passions in order to accomplish the Awakening, asks them: "What do you think: Is matter (rūpa) permanent (nitya) or impermanent (anitya)? - Impermanent. - What is impermanent, is it agreable (sukha) or painful (duhkha)? - Painful. - What is painful, is it the self (ātman) or the non-self (an-ātman)? - The non-self." Likewise with regard to the sensations (vedanā), perceptions (saṃjñā), mental compositions (saṃskāra) and consciousness (vijñāna). "This is why, you monks, all matter, be it internal or external, past, future or present, must be looked at according to reality as non-self."(40)

The theory of impermanence as it notably appears in the statement "whatever is subject to the law of origin is subject to the law of cessation", is also directly linked with the law of Dependent Origination (Theravādin, Vinaya).(41) The same idea is expressed by another school (Dharmaguptaka, Vinaya) in the following dialogue: "Which doctrine have you obtained? - That which the Tathāgata preaches, the Doctrine of Dependent Origination and likewise of Dependent Cessation. The causes from which things originate, the Tathāgata speaks of them. The causes by which things are stopped, again the great man of religion expresses their meaning."(42)

---

(40) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 194-195.

(41) Bareau, Biogr.I, pp. 348, 392.

(42) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 349.

(g) Stopping the stream of error

Reference to the complex role of suffering is explicitly skipped in certain comments on the principles of liberation, as we can observe in a relatively late account (Dharmaguptaka, Vinaya) which concentrates on the control of ignorance (avidyā), exposing the importance of the thought stream. This aspect is introduced somewhat metaphorically by the following set of questions put to the Buddha: "Who amongst the kings is sovereign such that being defiled he gives defilements? What can remain immaculate which is named error? On which stream floats that which has obtained the name of knowledge? Which stream does not run which is named deliverance?" The Buddha then answers in the same manner: "The sixth king is sovereign who being defiled gives defilements. That which is not defiled is immaculate, that which is defiled is called erroneous. Error is the stream on which one floats. That which can make it cease is knowledge, which can cause all streams to be abandoned, those of heaven and those of this world. He who is separated from the stream is not led astray by death. He who can dominate through attention obtains deliverance from the stream."(43)

Elucidating this metaphorical description Bareau exposes an implicit connection with suffering: "The sixth king (rājan) is obviously the sixth sovereign (indriya), which means faculty or organ, of the mind (manas), which is defiled (kliṣṭa) by error (moha). This is no other than ignorance (avidyā) which, according to the formula of Dependent Origination (pratītyasamutpāda), is the first source of all suffering, births and deaths, hence of the stream (srotas) which carries the being across the endless series of existences. Knowledge (jñāna) which allows us to dissipate the error, consequently allows us to stop this stream and, therefore, to obtain deliverance (vimukti)."(44) (Dissipation puts a stop to the stream which sustains avidyā - it does not destroy ignorance.) Thus, referring back to the pratītyasamutpāda, which he described as a partial comment on the Four Noble Truths (p. 228),

(43) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 234.

(44) Bareau, Biogr.I, p. 240.

Bareau reminds us of the essential causal connection between ignorance and suffering. But, while in the account of the "sixth king" ignorance, hence suffering, results from error defiling the mind, suffering may, as noticed above, also play a role which is not derived from ignorance directly. In his comment on duhkha in the "Threefold Knowledge" (p. 226) Bareau noticed that suffering as such was never defined as an impurity, and that suffering could be interpreted as a consequence of impurities in general instead of taking its direct origin from ignorance. We shall again refer back to this dual aspect of suffering in Buddhism - in its derived form and as a quasi-ontological principle - when we return to the pessimistic implications of the German views, in the final part of this chapter.

(h) On thought control and perfect consciousness

Coinciding with the pompous arrival of a beautiful courtesan named Āmrapālī, the Buddha begins preaching a sermon on perfect consciousness.(45) Although this connection is unlikely to have existed in the original version, as Bareau infers from the ten extant texts at his disposal (including Sanskrit, Pāli and four Chinese sources),(46) a combined selection of remarks from these texts now allow us to ascertain a misogynic touch within the Buddhist doctrine. First hear warnings: "O monks, remain ardent, perfectly conscious and attentive,

(45) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, p. 95.

(46) While for the first part of the Buddha's biography, evolving around the Awakening, Bareau had to rearrange reports dispersed throughout the canon, he could base the second part, evolving around the Buddha's complete Extinction, on one of the long Sūtras, the Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra, contained in the Dīrgha-āgama (Pāli: Dīgha-nikāya), referring to Waldschmidt's previous edition following a Sanskrit text of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, and using essentially one Pāli and four Chinese sources. Frauwallner (Vinaya, p. 163) adds that the most famous later biographies of the Buddha and authoritative texts such as the Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra are based on the text of the Skandhaka, a part of the Vinaya, which is not authentic old tradition but a legendary tale.

there comes the courtesan Āmrapālī. That is why I put you on your guard. Her beauty is so extraordinary that in the whole of the universe there is nothing similar." Two of the Chinese versions add more drastically: "See the woman Āmrapālī and her five hundred student courtesans. Lower your heads and correct your thoughts. They are wearing beautiful clothes and adornments, but they are like painted jars: on the outside they have splendid colours, but inside they contain nothing but refuse." This reflection, adds Bareau, is not unrelated to the meditation of the impure (aśubhabhāvanā) the aim of which is to instill definite disgust of beautiful body forms and, consequently, to overcome concupiscence. The Buddhist reaction provoked by the women is devoid of any cultural motivation, entirely unlike Schopenhauer's criticism of European women which, obviously, uses merely similar words: comparing their unrestraint female behaviour to that of the holy monkeys of Banāras, he brands the concept of the "lady" (die Dame) as a product of "our Old French gallantry and insipid female-veneration, this supreme blossom of Christian-Germanic stupidity".(47)

In one of the Chinese texts the theme of thought control and indulgence is developed one step further, making the principle of suffering apparent. Thus, the one who, aspiring to Buddhahood, "meditates on the five viscera (internal organs) of his body can also smooth out and stop the phenomena (dharma) of births and deaths. He sees that the exterior is pain, he sees that the interior is pain, too, and he corrects his thought."

(i) The Four Bases of Attention

According to five sources (Sanskrit, Pāli and three Chinese ones) the aged Buddha having fallen ill shortly before his complete Extinction (parinirvāna) is experiencing violent suffering. At the point of dying and with pain throughout his body, he remains (according to the Pāli source) "attentive (sata) and perfectly conscious" (sampajāna)", thus setting an example for the monks.(48) He indicates that after his

(47) Schopenhauer, P.P.II, pp. 675-676. Also compare our p. 61(49).

(48) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, pp. 138-140.

parinirvāna they will have to rely on themselves, consoling them that the doctrine can provide all the necessary assistance. Specifying this assurance he refers to the practice of the Four Bases of Attention (Sanskrit: smṛtyupasthāna; Pāli: satipaṭṭhāna). This meditational system concentrates on four objects: the body (kāya), the sensations (vedanā), thought (citta) and the ideas (dharma). The monk who remains ardent (ātāpin), perfectly conscious (samprajāna) and attentive (smṛtimant) in the pursuit of this meditation can chase covetousness (abhidhyā) and sadness (daurmanasya) from this world. These specifications show, as Bareau points out, that "an essential importance was attributed to this type of meditation which was and remains certainly one of the most recommended by Indian Buddhism".(49)

(j) Ānanda's failure to understand the Buddha's attitude

The previous episode on the smṛtyupasthāna cultivates, meta-philosophically speaking, "the negation of will" - this episode here talks about the neglect of the cultivation of "will", thus providing a complementary view. The standard scene of discomfort which, as we shall see, the prospect of losing the Buddha at the time of his parinirvāna arouses among his followers, foremost in Ānanda, is strangely modified by this episode (six principal sources) which, according to Bareau, must have been added at a relatively late epoch when legend had begun to present the Buddha as almost omnipotent.(50) In this account,

---

(49) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, p. 146. The method, in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta, has been described by Nyanaponika (Siegmund Feninger). For the Western mind, he feels, "the difficulty consists in the necessary but only gradually happening reorientation from ego-oriented or matter-oriented thinking to process-oriented thinking" (Heilsweg, p. 10). However, the existing form of this practice is the result of a revival around the turn of the century and therefore only of qualified interest (cf. Bechert, Th.-Buddh.I, pp. 47-51, 79-81). Regarding its historical development see Schmithausen (Vier Konzentrationen).

(50) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, pp. 153-159.

as in the following one, we are taken to a point where the Buddha is presented as if he could or might have abstained from his final Extinction, which would have secured mankind some "golden age", if it had not been for Ānanda's inability to seize this opportunity. The Buddha, telling Ānanda that "by cultivating the four bases of supernatural power" one could stay alive for a cosmic era (kalpa), or the rest of one's cosmic era, receives no response at all from his disciple "as if his thought was possessed by Māra". (Māra, the Evil One, is in fact the one who ultimately gets the blame for the Buddha's eventual refusal to remain in this world.)

In another, very similar episode (six sources) we hear of Ānanda actually asking the Buddha to remain in life for a cosmic era, substantiating and justifying this wish by emphasizing the general advantage for mankind.(51) The famous disciple repeats his wish three times, but the Buddha's reply remains negative; having already decided his Extinction (or promised it to Māra) and having rejected his vital compositions (āyuhsaṃskāra), it is too late now. Ānanda is even blamed by the Buddha (quite untypically) for not having made his request at an earlier occasion when there was still time to do so. (The blame is again passed on to Mara.)

The manner in which Ānanda, according to those descriptions, makes himself dependent on the Buddha's presence throws some light on two different levels of understanding within the Indian attitude of pessimism. Ānanda, feeling lost in an empirical world of suffering, expresses this attitude towards life more strongly than ever when he sees that the Buddha is about to leave him on his own. As in many others, Ānanda's behaviour manifests, on an empirical level, a general pessimistic attitude which consists in striving for some some way to terminate his own inherent wish for continuation. In this regard he could have resembled the Buddha, whose attitude represents a very different level, if it were not for his own inability to be aware of such a difference. Ānanda requests, or at least feels, that the

(51) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, pp. 182-189.

Buddha should have stayed longer with them in order to "comfort" them (golden age); to the Buddha the application of his magic power (ṛddhipāda), i.e. for him a non-saṃskāric form of "will", to survive for another era would in principal not have mattered (since he was already Awakened). Instead he is "angered" by Ānanda's behaviour and decides to disappear for good by giving up his living force (jīvita saṃskāra). He lets the dreaded event happen, philosophically speaking, because Ānanda had not grasped the essence of the Buddha's attitude. As his preoccupation with the worries and virtues of the empirical world indicates, the concern behind his wish that the Buddha should stay was not sincere enough. Had he, for instance, openly asked the Buddha to stay and then die, his attitude might have been more to the point, more in accordance with the second level regarding the understanding of negation. The negation of the will, as we encountered it in Schopenhauer, is in a sense a negative ontological category (compare pp. 73, 173-174). Not so for the Buddha, which Ānanda fails to understand, interpreting the Buddha's behaviour more in terms of some vibhavatṛṣṇa (p. 230(36)).

(k) The last words of the Buddha

Various sources report an episode in which the Buddha, shortly before his final Extinction, decides to present himself once more again as the Teacher.[52] Willing to clarify matters personally for the last time, he addresses his disciples: "Although I am suffering in my body, I am still capable of dissipating your doubts and errors" (Chinese). In his final words the Buddha repeats that they should follow the doctrine, that this world, including himself, was subject to impermanence, that births and deaths were terrible, and that their end would mean happiness. Ānanda and the assembled monks, incapable of grasping the Buddha's attitude, have to be told by a fellow monk that they should put an end to their lamentations, bearing in mind the law of impermanence.

---

(52) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, pp. 145, 149-150, 171-172.

(ℓ) A popular view of happiness and negation

At the occasion of the Buddha's funeral the Mallas are mentioned.(53) What makes the description of their behaviour interesting to us, is the fact that the attitude with which they cling to the apparent phenomenon of the Buddhist doctrine - but not its content - represents in a way the counterpart to its essence. Their "Buddhist" fervency is nourished by such features of the Buddha's personality which they can grasp, but which unfortunately tend to be exactly the transient things the Buddha had warned of. In a sense the behaviour of the Mallas characterizes a third level of Buddhist "negation", a form which, unlike Ānanda's philosophical misunderstanding, is not philosophical at all. They simply deplore the Buddha's disappearance as the loss of their living proof of happiness attainable through the negation of the bad side of existence.

(3) Spanning the hermeneutic gap: a meta-view of "will" and "suffering"

(a) Intentionality and the problem of stopping avidyā

On the basis of this representative biographical outline we shall now attempt an interpretation of the classical Buddhist approach to the unsatisfactory or unacceptable condition of human existence, in connection with the described German pessimistic response. The Germans all react personally to culture, including their own forerunners' thought. On the same basis they react to Buddhism, unaware of the actual role of the Buddha and the Buddhist thinkers. We therefore consciously use the Buddha's "biography" as a formal doctrinal and philosophical core of Buddhist thought, instead of resorting to a more abstract selection of the fundamentals of Buddhism. The Buddhist thinkers may not have had such a well-organized "biography" to go by, but they were Buddha-oriented. We encounter in the figure of the Buddha the prime exemplifier of an empirical, procedural approach to the development and transformation of an a-cultural reaction to the world. The Buddha is a Yogi, not a philosopher. He exemplifies in his

(53) Bareau, Biogr.II-1, p. 175.

capacity as the original Teacher, not as a commentator. Officially, he provides the core-concepts. Buddhist philosophy develops after the Buddha, i.e. "analytical" expansion follows later, while he remains the supreme model and aim of all aspirations. When the later Buddhist interpreters react philosophically to the Buddha's primary experience and original reaction to the world, they do not modify or contradict the Buddha's teachings (since there cannot be any "better" knowledge), but, acting as exemplifiers of their own insights in accordance with the Buddha's teaching, they elaborate and comment on a phenomenon which we have formally located in the Buddha's "biography".

Our following comparative analytical remarks are intended to expose some essential buddhological connections, the awareness of which would probably have prompted our Germans to reconsider or modify their pessimistic view in reaction to the Buddhist tradition. Concentrating on the concepts of "will" and "suffering" in connection with the meta-philosophical role of culture in the Indian tradition, we want to show why we may notice a pessimistic attitude in connection with Indian thought, but no genuine philosophical (metaphysical) pessimism. Schopenhauer's metaphysical view accepts only one essential category, his fundamental concept of "will". Looking for meta-philosophical approximations to this concept, we do in fact find certain aspects of will implicit in various forms of Indian thought, both in personal forms, for example, in textual, yogic or supernatural connections and in impersonal (i.e. saṃskāric) manifestations.

The most fundamental but very subtle aspect underlying the entire Indian tradition may be seen in connection with the phenomenon of texts (p. 174). In India texts are primarily considered as existing ab origine, regardless, in principle, of the existence of people. We find that textual manifestation, internal and overt, depends on an appropriate act of phonic intention, i.e. some impulse of will.[54] Describing this view in four simple steps, we may

---

[54] This view is developed in a very orthodox way in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā (see Radhakrishnan, Ind.Phil.II, ch. VI). "The word is ever present, since the utterance of it is only for the purpose of manifesting it to others" (p. 391). Also cf. Coomaraswamy, Hind.a.Buddh., p. 57.

distinguish: (a) "ontologically", some primordial level of the event of the pronouncing of the text; (b) a level of intentionality implying an inner intention or "willing" to pronounce; (c) the phonic representation as such, as a sort of inner pronunciation; (d) finally, the actual outer pronunciation. However, we cannot equate the sound and the text: the sound just manifests the text to a varying degree. The Veda is text, and so are the Upanisads (by virtue of their śruti connection with the Veda), i.e., we must differentiate between the aspects of either the text or a text. (Smrti may then be connected indirectly, since, after all, we are moving within one and the same Indian tradition.) The letter (akśara) is primarily sound. But, by the second century A.D. in Buddhism the notion of text becomes more similar to that in Europe: the text originally worshipped and deified by the Brahmans as the highest autonomous and self-sufficient entity, is now fixed, written down on palm leaves and treated as a material book. This concrete reality of the text in Buddhism constitutes a new level of textual manifestation, only indirectly linked with the Brahmanical conception of the text through their common cultural tradition. Unlike Brahmanism, Buddhism was sceptical also with regard to the terms on which the textual content rested. A concept "as it is" (yathā bhūtam, p. 254(73)) and assessed on some zero-level would be without any actual meaning; on an ordinary level, in an every-day context, it could have some practical meaning; and on the level of highest importance (param artha) regarding nirvāna, where it would be most formal, it might be considered as having no meaning whatsoever (at least in the case of most things).

In the Upanisads idea and thing, for instance the thought of the ātman and the ātman as such, are still largely the same. But Buddhism, having generally, and not just in the case of texts, separated the thing from its idea, can say that there is no ātman, but the idea thereof is bad and should hence be stopped (p. 231). Intentionality in the case of the Upanisads actualizes or "wills" the text including the knowledge (vidyā, jñāna) represented by it. Buddhism separates these two components and concentrates on the more "tangible" bad and negative aspect of knowledge, avidyā, and its

consequences (pratītyasamutpāda) in order to stop the whole process. In other words, "willing" becomes concerned less with the thing as such than with the thinking in connection with it, i.e. with the understanding or the non-understanding (jñāna or avidyā) respectively. This process involves intentionality on a very personal basis. From a neutral point of view we may be unable to see reality. Hence, Buddhism approaches the problem with the assumption that avidyā may be considered as the only basic form of reality. Since avidyā cannot be abolished and one cannot get out of it, one must stop it. In order to do so, one has to work back from the final consequences of avidyā such as suffering. This implies an appeal to be cleverer than one has been so far or, perhaps, cleverer regarding this principle of avidyā. In Buddhism each endeavour includes the elimination of certain elements while proceeding backwards from effect to cause. However, while avidyā as such - unlike Schopenhauer's will - lacks any dynamic aspect, this typically Buddhist and quite un-European approach follows a distinctly practical orientation.

The Buddha's cultural indifference, as compared to the Schopenhauerian concern, was illustrated by the episode of the encounter with the courtesans (pp. 233-234). The Buddha does not reject Āmrapālī because she herself, or her deceptive beauty as such, is "bad", but because she functions as a serious distraction in a meta-psychological sense. By yielding to the impressions received from sensual beauty we feed somehow the chain of Dependent Origination instead of stopping the whole process.(55) For Schopenhauer nature's deception practised through shortlived female beauty is another proof for the total uselessness of the will and its manifestations. This includes, ultimately, his own deceivable intellect, which, at best, may expose the nature of the deceptive mechanism. In Buddhism this whole idea of

---

(55) Suzuki (Studies, p. 121) mentions that according to the Laṅkāvatāra the Buddha, ruling out māyā as the final cause for this kind of error, explains, "whatever faults there are in connection with this erroneous world come from the clinging of the ignorant to that which is nothing but delusion of their own minds".

contemplating the ugly (here in connection with the beautiful) may be ranked as a meditational device, whereas Schopenhauer reacts to a principal cultural imprisonment, to which must ultimately be added his metaphysical-anthropological confinement. Gebser, in comparison, is in a better position to accept such imprisonment, together with a historical confinement, due to a certain cultural comfort derived from his idea of transparency, which allows him to settle the problem in a more conciliatory manner.

(b) Yogic intentionality: modification of volitional impulses

From a Buddhist point of view yogic methods might enable a person to see certain things as they really are (something which ordinary people cannot do). In order to achieve this, such a person is believed to change, in quite a practical sense, his state of consciousness in connection with certain dharmas. (The dharmas constitute one of the basic objects of the smṛtyupasthāna, pp. 234-235.)(56) These would first be used in an experimental speculative manner(57) which might eventually lead to some yogic experience. This event, leaving a person's language and mode of expression essentially unchanged, is considered to transform his personality so as to enable him to see the universe differently. However, not in terms of transcendental categories (as Mainländer wrongly assumed, p. 96) but as a different person in practice.

---

(56) Mrs. Rhys Davids (Dhamma-Saṅgani, p. xli) refers to the dhammas as such as "states of consciousness". The Dhammapada (1.1; Radhakrishnan, p. 58) declares that "the mental natures...are made up of thoughts", i.e. all dhammas are mind-made. Conze (Thought, p. 93) presents the dharmas, or "compounded things", ontologically as objective data, "i.e. the objects or supports of mind which is reckoned as the sixth sense-organ (cf. our p. 232). He comments (p. 103) that "as the supreme antidote to the belief in a 'self', the dharma-theory must... explain what actually happens on the assumption that the 'self' is not an active or actual factor".

(57) Conze (Thought, p. 47) explains the practical role of faith (śraddhā) as a merely provisional step. Cf. our p. 22(29).

The most elaborate formal reference to "will" in Buddhism appears with the development of the skandha subsystem which divides the dharmas into five groups (p. 230(36)). The fourth group, that of the saṃskāras, represents the concept which interests us in connection with will. The saṃskāras (mental compositions, or "synergies"[58]) may perhaps be described as a group of volitional impulses with an operational function of will. They play the will's role without being will as such. From a Schopenhauerian point of view, thirst (tṛṣṇa), concupiscence (kāma) and adherence to existence (the upādānas) - which we have found in the pratītyasamutpāda (along with a more ancient concept of the saṃskāras which we are presently not concerned with, p. 228) - are liable to be - wrongly - equated with the will.[59] Abstaining from any such direct equations, we would rather meta-describe both the Schopenhauerian will and the saṃskāric will as will which is involved in the origination of suffering in connection with some blindness or ignorance. This will also contains the hidden potential of "un-willing" - i.e. either negating or stopping - any form of dissatisfaction or suffering.

All ordinary, normal intentionality in Buddhist thought is saṃskāric. But since the concept of saṃskāras is much broader than the

---

(58) This term was suggested by Mrs. Rhys Davids, see Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi, p. xi. Cf. bhava and "more-will", our p. 227(30).

(59) Von Glasenapp, Indb., p. 92; he finds (p. 94) that the only thing "common to both ancient Buddhism and Schopenhauer's thought, apart from generally Indian views and the rejection of the ideas of God and soul, is the belief that it is the life-affirming volitional forces, the karma-producing saṃskāras, which bring about a new existence with a new individual consciousness" (also cf. Weisheit, p. 37). He ignores that karma is not "produced" by the saṃskāras, it just presupposes them. This misunderstanding is already found in Mainländer (our pp. 94-95). Conze (Thought, p. 104) merely de-individualizes the issue: "In fact there is action (karma), but no agent (kāraka). Our responsible actions are not the work of a 'self', but of the constituents of the fourth skandha" (i.e. the saṃskāras).

notion of will, our comparison restricts itself to those aspects which can be brought nearest to will as it has interested us so far. One aspect is conscious and completely personal, while another is impersonal, although revealed on a personal level. Samskāric will can be seen as impersonal volitional impulses corresponding to a certain extent with the innate drive to go on following the inertia natural to the elementary processes of life. On the personal side the situation is essentially the same, although in the light of the Buddha's biography we can specify various types or levels of personal intentionality. The personal principle or form could be described in terms of some highly conscious, super-conscious will; it could also be connected with sexual or other individualized drives, individual energy (vīrya, pp. 220, 222), or individual working, perhaps even to Buddhahood.

Thus, from a Buddhist point of view, Brahmanical phonic textual intentionality would be superseded by some yogic, perhaps even pre-buddhic, intentionality. Similarly the magical, quasi-supernatural kind of intentionality (implied in Ānanda's request that the Buddha should prolong his life) would, like yogic intentionality, appear as one of controlled samskāras. But the Buddha's intentionality is a kind of pure intentionality, that is to say samskāra-less.(60) For the Buddha it all turns into a problem of decision (pranidhāna), since his samskāric intentionality, his desire, was almost exhausted.(61) The Buddha's ultimate intentionality cannot be described in any dualistic manner, including any form of reference

---

(60) Schmithausen (Leidh., p. 924) elaborates that the unlimited continuation of the Buddha's activity on earth would have called for a sector within the conditioned world which would have been in no way subjected to metaphysical universal suffering (samskāra duhkhatā).

(61) Regarding the feasibility of such a decision, Bechert (Th.-Buddh., p. 4) remarks that "not the intentional decisions (Willensentscheidungen), but the external circumstances of a being are determined by his karma".

to the skandhas.[62] His trans-saṃskāric decision transcends any personalistic negation. Yet, as far as the problem of will in Buddhism is concerned, our analysis can penetrate to it only in the course of an interpretation of the saṃskāras; they represent for us a fundamental interpretative device.

The central significance of the will in Schopenhauer makes it necessary to expose some kind of correspondent sphere in Buddhism. However, strictly speaking, there is no "intentionality" among actual Buddhist concepts. The resulting hermeneutic problem is characterized by the fact that such a concept exists only in our vocabulary and from a Western point of view. The saṃskāras are a large sphere which, in some non-conceptual manner, could contain "intentionality": it is the very sphere where the Buddha leaves something behind or "negates" something - i.e., where he takes the step which warrants our comparison. But, from some merely asymptotical correspondence of certain saṃskāric aspects to "intentionality" we cannot conclude that it actually exists within the sphere of saṃskāras. "Intentionality" serves us as an indispensable hermeneutic link, marked by the incongruity of its one role as a very important central concept in Schopenhauer with its other role as a non-conceptual, marginally important, peripheral aspect in Buddhism.

(c) Suffering

Schopenhauer's ontological description of the role of the will including the illusory character of the universe provide a distinct philosophical (metaphysical) basis for his culturally inspired pessimism. If we were to interprete Buddhism entirely from his point of view,[63] or even in some generally European manner, the whole conception of suffering in saṃsāra could be assessed as pessimistic par excellence. (Similarly,

---

(62) Suzuki (Studies, p. 136) says that "the essence of Buddahood is neither of the skandhas nor not of them, neither describable nor indescribable".

(63) Conze (Parallels, pp. 18-20) grants him "numerous, and almost miraculous, coincidences with the basic tenets of Buddhist philosophy".

the early buddhologists considered Buddhism as pessimistic because they could not see how nirvāna could have been achieved practically.) However, Buddhism looks at suffering and the derivation of suffering from quite a different angle and with a very different objective. Suffering is, along with the non-self and impermanence (duhkha - anitya - anātman, p. 231), one of the three fundamental Buddhist principles or marks (laksana) of the universe (although not an aspect of reality as such).(64) But, apart from being treated as some fundamental, quasi-ontological principle, it can, quite independently, also appear in a derived form, namely, derived from avidyā. (Somewhat similarly, Hegel would, apart from the material cause he sees, deduce man's suffering from not being aware of or being incapable of seeing his own ignorance: remember Hegel's expressive restriction of the Indian mind to a level of "dreaming".) As regards the former, the fundamental aspect of suffering, we must be aware that it does not represent a truly ontological principle. As opposed to Schopenhauer, and Hegel, who are decidedly ontological, Buddhism is absolutely non-ontological. This was not noticed by Schopenhauer (see our remark on Ānanda's failure to understand the Buddha, p. 237). Gebser, also, conceived of "that retreat into the cave" and "the wish for a reversal of birth" on a strictly ontological basis, notwithstanding his partly misapplied cultural and historical categories. Like Schopenhauer,

---

(64) Ruegg (Study, p. 6) discards the term "pessimistic", pointing out that with a view to this triad, duhkha "denotes not only 'suffering' in the ordinary sense but also that which is 'unsatisfactory' from the philosophical point of view...and it comprises not only sensations that are painful but also those that are pleasant and neutral". In his article on Leidhaftigkeit, Schmithausen discusses the complex tradition of a triple conception of suffering (according to sources later than those of the Sermons), which distinguishes between a painful suffering (duhkha-duhkhatā), a suffering as a consequence of the decline of pleasure (viparināma-duhkhatā), and the actual "metaphysical" suffering characterizing all originated existence due to its transience (samskāra-duhkhatā).

Gebser essentially sees an ontological negation in the Buddha's doctrine exemplified "not so much by living it but rather by dying it" (compare p. 148).(65) Schopenhauer never interpreted India psychologically (as compared to a British empiricist perspective in which the image of India would have certainly included some psychological and possibly "occult" aspects); his conception of the changeless will represents essentially an idealistic, non-empiricist reflection of cultural change and, only in this sense, historical change. Gebser, who is characterologically and historically quite aware of the psychological and even the occult, does not look for any empiricist patterns either.

In order to follow the implications of the derived aspect of avidyā we like to recall that the Buddha stressed all possible instances of suffering, "ill", in all living beings.(66) At this point it is important to notice that suffering - the observation of suffering - prompts the Buddhist outlook, but does not cause it. The Buddha said that suffering (duhkha) is the first result of universal ignorance (avidyā). We have seen that, according to the pratītyasamutpāda, avidyā is the first link in an interpendent chain, duhkha the last link. It is exactly this connection, viewed in terms of strict causality, which interests the Buddhist in an external quasi-objective manner. In other words, we could say that he is essentially a Buddhist because he has found or established the connection between those links, i.e., he makes a quasi-phenomenological investigation, whereas, in contrast, Schopenhauer pursues his own fundamental connection with the thing as such. The Schopenhauerian pessimist, similar to the Christian, arrives at his specific conviction because of suffering, i.e., because of his personal experience of it.

---

(65) Gebser, U.G., p. 49.

(66) Conze (Thought, pp. 35-36) comments: "For the beginner it can mean that all his experience is also ill, i.e. that it is in some way or other connected with suffering and unpleasant feelings....What is in question is the universality of ill." He adds that "on the second stage, the world is regarded as predominantly ill", until, finally, he has "the insight that everything conditioned is totally ill".

Thinking of Seneca's philosophy in this context, we notice some seeming, but superficial resemblance with Buddhism. Apart from a certain Stoic detachment from the physical aspects of life (a similarity which had fascinated Spengler so much), Seneca (like Hegel) also sees some connection between suffering and ignorance, or rather the lack of right knowledge. Suffering for him is in fact some form of cosmic language. But while the core of Buddhism is not the suffering as such, but the establishment of the causal connection, in Seneca's philosophy suffering strikes us as a matter of idealized personal experience, with distinct reference to himself as the suffering subject. The Buddhist refers to suffering as if it were someone else's, not his, and by no means affecting any personal self. Objectively pessimism is not deducible from suffering, but from a personal or historical experience of this world (Seneca, the Christians, the Schopenhauerians). In Buddhism there cannot be any purely personal pessimism, nor any historical pessimism (since the Buddhist view is detached, operating with an uncontrasted general notion of <u>the</u> Indian culture (p. 16)).

If we now look at the other aspect of <u>duḥkha</u>, that of being a fundamental principle, we observe that in Buddhism suffering is often stated merely in terms of a purely existential fact. In that sense someone would become a member of the Buddhist order (<u>saṅgha</u>) after and not because of suffering. Neither the factors which produce suffering (<u>upādāna</u>) nor suffering itself (<u>duḥkha</u>) can be abolished. But the production can be stopped, by, for instance, understanding. However, in this case there is no causal connection: becoming mature coincides with the understanding of one's suffering. We might find in Buddhism some remote parallel to pessimism in connection with the disappointment which could occur as a concomitant of this event of maturation (and which would imply that there was originally some hope or personal belief). Suffering, which in any case is not deducible from disappointment (compare p. 226), is here endowed with a quasi-ontological status. This shows how we must also consider suffering, apart from its derived form, from a non-empirical aspect, i.e. suffering as a principle. In Europe these would have been deduced from one

another. In Buddhism they are discussed side by side, in a parallel manner. This means that we can talk about suffering regardless of anybody's feelings. Schopenhauer's culturally affirmative negation (his pessimism) projects his metaphysical derivation of suffering onto himself personally. The Buddhist thinker who has no actual contempt for mankind, since he is not in contact, hence not in opposition, with the ordinary man, uses the personal experience for a culturally neutral negation which ultimately by-passes any personal self. In Buddhism there is no concept of pessimism because it is not deduced. In which manner it could have been deduced on the basis of a subjective activation of the latent presence of culture shall be suggested by the following remarks.

(d) Liberation from culture

We have no evidence that thinking as such should be any different in different cultures. But, by looking at tradition as a mode of instruction rather than of thinking, we may become aware of certain meaningful cultural components in the various roles of suffering or, more generally, of the negative side of the universe. In doing so we must look upon the concept of culture as a term of reflection (p. 12), nearer to self-consciousness than to self-knowledge. Regarding culture, we usually confuse our sphere of habits, attitudes, beliefs etc. and the sphere of our reflections of culture (with all "its" and my habits). The Buddha, officially without any philosophical antecedents,(67) stresses empirical consciousness (vijñāna, pp. 227, 231) - disregarding any cultural reflections - as the chief reason for getting rid of the universe. (Whereas in someone like Mainländer this would be a matter of personal disgust.) This means that in an era which had no conscious idea of culture to begin with, the Buddha took an explicitly, not just implicitly, a-cultural stance. The ensuing psycho-sociological repercussions directly helped the formation of some state and concept

(67) Conze (Thought, p. 30) writes: "Bitter and incredible as it must seem to the contemporary mind, Buddhism bases itself first of all on the revelation of the Truth by an omniscient being, known as 'the Buddha', and secondly on the spiritual intuition of saintly beings."

in the sense of a culture, superseding the previously existing (unconscious) version of the culture (i.e., the Brahmans became aware of themselves as possessing a culture with its own distinct qualities and which was paralleled by the cultures of the Buddhists, the Ājīvikas, the Nirgranthas (Jainas) and others[68]). Philosophically, however, Buddhism develops no subjective sense for culture at all, and hence remains non-cultural in its instruction. If changes of the mode of instruction, i.e. within the tradition, appear to us as cultural, this is only so because our habitual point of view is cultural. According to our meta-philosophical presuppositions we must overcome culture - through culture awareness and as a meta-object of change - in order to be able to think philosophically. But from a Buddhist point of view, only on bare ground can things happen. Therefore, we notice in Buddhism a fundamental need to get rid of (objective) culture as the form or substance which sustains empirical consciousness, rather than to dwell on it and develop it. It is the Buddhist striving for the cessation of suffering which, in requiring a total liberation of thought, implies first of all the liberation from culture.

In quite a different way, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche also try to abolish values which are cultural. All happen to think in an a-cultural manner, but only inasmuch as they are not completely aware that they actually react in the interest of their personal negative outlooks on European culture, rather than in order to secure some indispensable prerequisite for their thinking proper. Quite openly, Nietzsche and Spengler, and to some degree even Gebser, worry about culture. Explicitly, all three take the tradition of instruction as culturally and naturally given (implicitly we already find this in Hegel). Socrates, too, as many other European philosophers, feels that culture is always present, but he tries to disperse its influence in the interest of his own philosophical thinking, which promotes a positive personal outlook.

---

(68) Cf. Aśokan pillar edict no. VII (Sircar, Inscript., p. 75).

(c) The role of Yoga

From our meta-position we can say that Buddhism wants to do away with all cultural objects because their reflections occupy our empirical consciousness. The stopping of all reflective processes including their objective cultural implications is one of the main aims of Buddhist Yoga (compare smṛtyupasthāna, p. 235). Ultimately it amounts to a liberation of thought since by stopping those reflections an inner and mental process is discontinued and finally annihilated,[69] together with all cultural reflections. But there exists no conscious aim in Yoga to depart from culture, or, more precisely, to stop "musing" (dhījñāna) upon culture.[70]

Buddhist Yoga, and yoga in general, has remained something highly a-cultural. It never intended to achieve consciously any cultural results or to analyse thought in terms of culture as we are doing it here. Our selected German perspectives have shown that, in a Western context, our cultural achievements can be looked at as if something had been naturally given to us, or as if we had inherited something in a quasi-genetic manner. In this sense all of our ideas could be reduced to primarily culturally given things, i.e. in terms of cultural causality (as could, practically speaking, our spiritual or philosophical "success"). The Buddha tried to do away with

(69) According to Conze (Thought, p. 58), the yogin's denial of this world as it appears depends on the degree of his dissatisfaction with the conditioned world and his consequent move towards the unconditioned world, while "for a long time his idea of Nirvana is necessarily provisional and rudimentary". Conze assumes "two objectively existing and mutually exclusive poles - the ever-changing five skandhas and the everlasting Nirvana which results from their cessation".

(70) "Musing" (Pāli: jhāna) is a term much favoured by Mrs. Rhys Davids to describe two contrasting aspects of reflection: a later monkish "way of so worsening sense that the muser became already dead to the world, dead indeed to any world"; and, for the Buddha, "it was to be so intent on the quickening of our other senses...fitly called Rūpa-jhāna, musing of the next worlds" (Gotama, pp. 139-140).

cultural achievements (which he did not know or about which he was not concerned under this particular aspect); namely, in his Yogic propaedeutics concerning the systematic stopping of reflective procedures.(71) What appears as the negative aspect of Yoga, especially Buddhist Yoga, regarding these reflective procedures must have been absolutely neutral with regard to the implied trivial cultural objects (regardless of whether they were actual or potential ones). All were left behind, or made irrelevant, as we have said.

If, in the interest of our meta-view, we change our perspective slightly so as to look at the character of our own discussion, we come to realize that this neutrality or, subjectively, non-existence of the cultural aspect in Yoga must not dominate our culture awareness. Consequently, we might feel tempted to ask: should we, or must we, in order to get at the core of Indian Yoga (qua yogin as it were) disband our own culture, or become acculturated, or nothing of the like? Yet, for all practical purposes this entire question should never have been asked in this manner, simply, because it tends to exert its own immediate cultural force. (Compare Bharati's attempt of cultural self-qualification, and, p. 215, our own conscious cultural disqualification.) In other words, the character quality of our reflection, i.e. the cultural element in it, must be eliminated - irrespective of our cultural objective - if our hermeneutic movement is to take us beyond the structural foundations of our own approach. This consciousness of our metaphysical self-application, within our hermeneutic consciousness, is itself metaphysical (which means not developmental). Practically, we can look at it as something intuitive (p.22) which potentially may come about without any yogic effort, but simply in the manner of a spontaneous Awakening. But when we refer to Awakening as the result of yogic proceedings, as the

---

(71) The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path (our pp. 229-230) represents in a way the first known integral Yoga system (cf. Werner, Yoga, pp. 120-130). Heiler (Vers., p. 46) mentions that "Yoga technique has had its richest development in Buddhism, although in the ancient Buddhist texts we come across the word Yoga only very rarely".

rising of bodhicitta, we observe consciousness first of all in a developmental rather than a metaphysical context. With the Awakening having already been brought about, somewhere and somehow, we may, nevertheless, say that there are many yogic procedures which have resulted in nothing and which, therefore, apparently show no causal connection with any Awakening. Regardless of the technique of this Awakening, we do not see it as a transformation but as an appearance of "something else", i.e., change occurs as the experience of a metaphysical and ontological Awakening. (This means that the procedural perspective adopted in the "biography" is merely formal; compare Bareau's remark p. 224.) We may recall that Bharati (p. 188), denying any causal connection between sādhana and siddhi, describes it more loosely as an experience in accordance with psychosomatic chance, which, as he carefully points out, could bestow no ontological status on its content. In Buddhism this is indeed reflected by a high degree of formality (compare p. 229, madhyamā pratipadā; p. 240, formal). But considering the socio-cultural difference of a person at the time of the Upanisads and someone historically nearer to Schopenhauer, or Bharati, we would expect them to each relate their "own" experience differently, either in some a-cultural manner or by reacting to culture. Schopenhauer reacts by projecting his metaphysically exposed insights onto his personal self. Bharati integrates some "ineffable" element, explicitly treated as a personal secret, into his culture reaction. However, in Brahmanism (which is founded on what it considers the text) the personal experience cannot legitimately be acknowledged as a starting-point, but only as an aim. Buddhism does avail itself of the personal experience,[72] but the Buddha, too, denies this ontologically to the people (p. 226(27)). Meta-philosophically, Buddhist nirvāna is not the product of a cultural or psychological negation, but of a metaphysical

---

[72] Conze (Thought, p. 57) remarks, in connection with nirvāna, that "everyone must experience it personally for himself...because reasoning (tarka) cannot get anywhere near it".

Awakening.[73] Buddhism is metaphysically negative, but culturally neutral, and hence is not pessimistic and is without any concept of pessimism.

(f) Pessimism and nirvāna

The lack of any concept of pessimism should, apart from the various historical reasons for it exposed so far, also be understood in connection with the different cultural role and significance of knowledge in Buddhism as compared to the function of knowledge in the thought of our Germans. It was these thinkers' personal evaluations of man's cultural condition, partly with a special view to the history of the world, which led them to believe that the main principle of the world, or at least the probable or possible fate of the world, was useless, appalling or positively undesirable. The main type of hopelessness implied in the pessimistic view assumes a clearer outline

---

[73] Stcherbatsky (Nirvāna, pp. 4, 15), who first of all wants to allow for the possibility of a pre-Buddhist positive conception of nirvāna (as in brahma-nirvāna), still explains its actual Buddhist meaning as complete annihilation. In an explicitly different interpretation, Schmithausen (Erlösung, pp. 158-161) holds that in ancient Buddhism "the term nirvāna does not indicate annihilation but rather an entering into a completely different kind of existence". He mentions nirvāna as a "sphere of immortality" (amṛtā dhātu) analogous to the yogic spheres of meditation, yet transcending them. It is an eschatological absolute which, without any positive relation to the world, is only the place of liberation. He also accepts that some ātman-like element may outlast extinction, since in the canonical texts the ātman is usually not strictly denied but simply referred to as inconceivable and pushed into the background for primarily practical reasons; only later is this spiritual practice turned into a theoretical dogma. Suzuki (Studies, pp. 125, 127-128) explains that, according to the author of the Laṅkāvatāra, "nirvāna is realized when one can see into the abode of suchness (yathābhūtārthasthānadarśanam)", i.e., seeing things yathābhūtam "absolutely transcending all categories constructed by mind; for it is the Tathāgata's own inner consciousness".

if we draw into our analysis a certain seemingly practical aspect of knowledge (although by no means more practical than the whole cultural reaction as such): namely, by asking if for the pessimist any knowledge of the world could potentially ever show him "the way out". (Incidentally, we also encounter this problem in late Mādhyamika Buddhism.(74))

In the Buddha's case we notice that his knowledge about suffering as seen in accordance with the pratītyasamutpāda also gives him the knowledge about nirvāna. But, how successful was change in such thinkers as Schopenhauer? Was his knowledge about the world as will and imagination, which were bad things, actually liberating? Was this discovery any good in this sense? Was there a certain progression, if not progress? And could he return "liberated" to the world in which he lived? Here, in its connection with the role of knowledge (both epistemological and ontological), we observe that aspect of his pessimism which is emancipated from culture (p. 74). In principle, the gentle pessimism of Gebser also belongs here, since his diaphanic liberation is essentially a method of staying in this world without any more "practical" relief as would ensue from yogic transformation than in Schopenhauer's case.

In other words, we can look at knowledge as either dependent or as non-dependent on culture. In the course of our assessment of the role of knowledge with regard to a certain level of pessimism (p. 26) we might want to postulate the world (as world, or as culture) as known, or as not yet known. But the latter ought perhaps to make us hesitate before deciding that such a postulation is possible at all. It is the historical prospect here which asks for a subtle distinction within the object of culture: we must decide if and how the world is going to be enriched by a certain kind of knowledge or teaching. In the

---

(74) Nāgārjuna commented that nirvāna was not describable and not created; furthermore, since it cannot be obtained by body, word or thought, the doctrine of śūnyatā (emptiness) is developed to get rid of theories altogether (Radhakrishnan, Phil.I, p. 666; Conze, Thought, pp. 243, 249).

Buddha's case it may be enrichment, although, paradoxically, the content of the enrichment has no connection with the world; rather, the conception of nirvāna implies the world as overcome, or even as irrelevant. Furthermore, we must also decide to what extent such a new form of knowledge becomes established or perhaps becomes the main directive value in culture. The very question of pessimism-optimism has to imply some cultural characteristics: we must clearly see how meaningful this question can become within a given culture. In the case of Schopenhauer or Gebser the whole situation is reversed as compared to that of Buddhism. They both present the world as if through them it had now become known. But their contribution is in fact theoretical rather than practical, and is actually devoid of any principal historical or anthropological change. In Buddhism, perhaps surprisingly, the marvellous discovery and mastering of the law of suffering by the Buddha results in no optimism (unlike in the case of Hegel, or Marx, who happily use their special dualistic insights as a basis for their optimistic processes of knowledge which has to serve some liberating conception of cultural progress). It characterizes Buddhism that any potential optimism submerges in its overall problem and becomes irrelevant with regard to the whole. Instead, the attitude which Buddhism exposes to a European observer whose criticism does not include his own position may understandably strike him as pessimistic. In our meta-terminology we may say that Buddhism is logically pessimistic (p. 245); as soon as we leave this logic behind, it appears as soteriologically optimistic. The world of saṃsāra is bad, but also good because it helps - as a necessary prerequisite - to reach nirvāna. The Buddha's knowledge about nirvāna may appear as the central value from within Buddhist culture, but held against culture as such, it manifests no reaction to it, since its concern is completely elsewhere.(75)

---

(75) Ziegler (Buddho, p. 104) comments that "the European protestants" hate their own reform problem when they see it in others - "but the Indian protestant Buddho knows nothing of this hatred against his own (problems of) overcoming".

The disapprovals and misgivings of Schopenhauer and our other Germans remain anthropological or historical. These thinkers do not take their pessimistic observations axiologically beyond culture, but rather rely on them as negative values for some metaphysical assessment of their condition (regardless of how small the emphasis on the metaphysical part may be). When, for example, death is negated, organized or integrated, i.e. somehow absorbed, in response to its cultural role, this change in knowledge brings no redemption. Paradoxically, as it may seem, for the true German pessimist the highest wisdom (unlike ἀταραξία, the ancient ideal of equanimity) goes with the greatest unhappiness, since it necessitates, and reveals, the deepest insights into fundamental human misery. The existential human condition, as he sees it, persists unchanged, in fact more clearly than before. We may, therefore, say that the negation, or integration, which our German thinkers offer, is essentially part of the existential description; it may provide some aesthetical or psychological comfort, but it provides no way out. The ultimate uselessness of the deployed knowledge forms an essential vein of their particular quest for it. This entire form of protest dwells on a basic contradiction, or even asks for it.(76) The condition of contradiction at the core of pessimism is often reflected upon in a merely automatic manner (for instance by reintroducing any would-be solution into the problem). Thus, while (metaphysical) knowledge is accepted as a cultural value, it is not able to help dissolve the decisive connections with the negative values in question. A familiar example is the theme of death. Buddhism agrees that death may be seen essentially as something bad. Consequently, the path of deathlessness (amrta patha), which overcomes death, is viewed as something good. In other words, death when overcome is something positive. The Buddha's dogma is world unhappiness, but - lacking the cultural ties of the German pessimists - he can successfully represent total happiness.

---

(76) Horkheimer (Schoph., p. 158) considers "the contradiction immanent in autonomous thinking", present since the days of the theodicy (cf. our p. 79(10)), as fully visible since Schopenhauer.

Chapter Eight

Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta: ignorance and identity

(1) A backward glance at German individuation and negation

When our Germans responded to Vedāntic thought or to selected Vedāntic concepts, they did not act as Vedāntins, nor as detached observers, but as persons seeking support for their own ideas. Thus, Schopenhauer venerated the Indian thinkers, including Śaṅkara, because he was convinced that they had obviously been trying to say what he himself finally did say. Treating them as his cosmological forerunners, he saw no essential difference between their world and his own. Even Deussen, who studied Śaṅkara so thoroughly, drew typically Schopenhauerian consequences. The careful Gebser sensed that the attempt to understand India wanted some fundamental insight into Indian consciousness, and - in an attempt to bridge the culture gap so clearly felt by Spengler - he began to measure identity, again, in terms of European individuality, reckoning that the Indian aim essentially was self-dissolution. Confidently, but with aloofness, Gebser tries to understand India on a complementary basis, quite unlike Schopenhauer, whose solidarity with Indian thought could not exceed some "level of deficiency", having used such terms as "will" or "maya" entirely in the interest of his own form of negation. In this chapter we shall use these two Schopenhauerian

concepts as the main keys for the meta-philosophical corridor which will permit us to have a look at negation in a Śaṅkaran context. Vedānta being the only system in India which has produced a concept of individuation, negation may be expected to involve some aspect of individual identity.

The Vedāntic commentaries are concerned with conceptualization. However, in the Upaniṣads, or the Bhagavadgītā, there are no actual concepts yet which as such could have directly been taken over. Śaṅkara becomes a central figure by exposing the conceptualized form of what the older texts had only implied, perhaps. Although, he may not have conceptualized "concept" the way we do but rather seen himself as "revealing" some hidden beliefs, or intuitions, we prefer to distinguish here between different "degrees" of concepts.

(2) Hermeneutic key concepts in Śaṅkara's outlook

(a) Identity: tat tvam asi

The fundamental conception of identity underlying all Vedāntic thought is, as Paul Deussen reassures us, most succinctly summed up in the Upaniṣadic dicta tat tvam asi (Chānd. 6.8.7) and aham brahma asmi (Bṛh. 1.4.10). This identity formula (see mahāvākyas pp. 184, 199-200) had already struck Schopenhauer as containing his own metaphysical answer (p. 54), i.e., soteriologically speaking, the epitomy of his structural metaphysical analysis of liberation. Śaṅkara's comment on Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtra 2.1.22 raises the problem of the difference and superiority of the free brahman in relation to the embodied ātman. While the Upaniṣadic search for the knowledge of the ātman implies to Śaṅkara a difference between the agent and the work, he emphasizes that there exists simultaneously an indication of non-difference in those words "that art thou" (Chānd. 6.8.7). On the basis of this particular proposition (or knowledge) Śaṅkara argues[1] that "the transmigratory state of the individual soul and the creative quality of the brahman

(1) We quote from Śaṅkara in accordance with Thibaut's and, to some extent, Deussen's Sūtra translations.

vanish at once, the whole phenomenon of plurality, which springs from the wrong knowledge, being sublated by perfect knowledge, and (he asks) what becomes then of the creation and the faults of not doing what is beneficial, and the like? For that this entire apparent world (saṃsāra), in which good and evil actions are done, etc. is a mere illusion, owing to the non-discrimination of (the Self's) limiting adjuncts (upādhis), viz. a body, and so on, which spring from name and form the presentations of nescience, and does in reality not exist at all, we have explained more than once. The illusion is analogous to the mistaken notion (abhimāna) we entertain as to dying, being born, being hurt, etc. of ourselves (our selfs; while in reality the body only dies, is born etc.)." What Śaṅkara says is that from an ultimate level of knowledge there does not truly exist a world of saṃsāra in which the ātman as an individual soul could wander, but that there exists only universal identity with the brahman; this is commonly not seen for the simple reason that on the prevailing level of nescience (avidyā) we sustain our personalities through identification with the upādhis, which however pertain to the non-self.

In another comment (Sūtra 2.3.46) Śaṅkara uses the formula tat tvam asi again to back up and illustrate his own thought. It provides him with a basis which allows him to derive that the suffering in saṃsāra of the individual soul (or self), itself a misconception due to avidyā, is not shared by the highest soul (or Self). This suffering of the ātman, as he comments, is an error (bhrama) from the self's non-differentiation regarding the upādhis and connected principles, and is ultimately as unreal as one's own body. With a view to the ultimate identity of everything with the brahman, we should, when following Śaṅkara, see that cosmologically everything is unreal and dreamlike, that "the entire expanse of things is mere illusion (māyā). The world consisting of ether, etc., remains fixed and distinct up to the moment when the soul cognizes that the brahman is the Self of all; the world of dreams on the other hand is daily sublated by the waking state" (3.2.4). The brahman is never truly affected by avidyā (2.1.9): "As the magician (māyāvin) is not at any time

affected by the magical illusion (māyā) produced by himself, because it is unreal (avastu), so the highest Self (paramātman) is not affected by the world-illusion (saṃsāra)." Śaṅkara adds (2.1.33), "analogously, the activity of the Lord also may be supposed to be mere sport (līlā), proceeding from his own nature, without reference to any purpose".

Śaṅkara observes a certain mechanism of our presumed self-deception. He explains his idea by making use of a subtle distinction in our attitudes of sympathizing with the fate of our friends or relatives: only those who have so far wrongly believed themselves as really having sons or friends could truly suffer such a feeling as that of losing them, whereas those who have had no such personal attachment to the same people would not suffer from their loss at all. On the basis of this kind of explanation, he says, even an ordinary man should be able to grasp the value of perfect knowledge; how much more so then the one who, essentially being of purely spiritual nature himself, sees only the undifferentiated, object-less ātman. Śaṅkara elaborates further that "thus the Lord also is not affected by pain, although pain be felt by that part of him which is called the individual soul, which is presented by nescience, and limited by the buddhi and other adjuncts (upādhis). That also the soul's undergoing pain is due to nescience only, we have already explained. Accordingly the Vedānta-texts teach that, when the soul's individual state, due to nescience, is sublated, it becomes brahman, 'thou art that etc.'." In short, what Śaṅkara says is that avidyā, or ignorance of the essential meaning of the identity formula, is the reason for suffering in saṃsāra.

(b) Subject-object and empirical data evaluation

We find an elementary key to Śaṅkara's reasoning in his own introduction to his commentary as a whole (1.1): "It is a matter not requiring any proof that the object (viṣaya) and the subject (viṣayin), whose respective spheres are the notion of the 'thou' (the non-ego) and the 'ego', and which are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, cannot be identified." Consequently, any superimposition (adhyāsa) of the qualities (dharma) of one onto the other would have

to be wrong. Thus, when people say 'that am I', 'that is mine', they provide examples for their innate (naisargika) habit of confusing things by such transfer or superimposition which Śaṅkara defines as "the apparent presentation, in the form of remembrance, to consciousness of something previously observed in some other thing". He illustrates this problem of mistaken identity by drawing on such metaphors as that of the mother of pearl taken for silver, or the moon appearing double to someone with deficient eyesight. By establishing a subject-object relation with oneself, or, in other words, in trying to see and understand one's own self, one is inevitably in danger of superimposing wrong or non-existent qualities onto the self, also. Such a mistaken transfer could, of course, never affect the essential self. Moreover, it would be a sign of ignorance (avidyā) as opposed to knowledge (vidyā) or the ability to assess things correctly in accordance with their own nature (vastu-svarūpam).(2) Nevertheless, Śaṅkara concedes that, as long as the true identity with the highest self has not yet been fully understood, the empirical aspect of his category of individuality may also be considered valid. That is, it would represent some relative form of reality comparable to that experienced in a dream, before waking up (2.1.14).

The actual connection of avidyā and our natural ways and means of perception is explained by Śaṅkara as a reflection of our innate erroneous manner of data connection. Such data as make us think in such terms as "I" or "mine" depend on perception. This in turn

(2) Deussen (System, p. 57) thinks the reason for the erroneous empirical view must lie in the knowing subject in which avidyā is innate; he indicates as its cause incorrect perception and as its nature incorrect imagination. Unlike Vedānta - as he himself points out - and in accordance with Kant, Deussen seeks an explanation "in the natural formation of our faculty of knowledge (Erkenntnisvermögen)". Kant, he suggests, could actually provide "the true scientific basis for the system of Vedānta" (cf. our p. 111). Deussen's ambition to explore where Śaṅkara has supposedly stayed behind his own range of thought, in order to reveal "its greatness further", is quite Schopenhauerian.

requires sense organs, these in turn require some basis, such as a body, and bodily action requires the superimposition of some self onto it. All these steps are regarded as essential for any form of common understanding. The following lines illustrate Śaṅkara's argument (Introd. 1.1): "But how can the means of right knowledge such as perception, inference, etc., and scriptural texts have for their object that which is dependent on nescience? Because, we reply, the means of right knowledge cannot operate unless there be a knowing personality, and because the existence of the latter depends on the erroneous notion (abhimāna) that the body, the senses, and so on, are identical with, or belonging to, the Self of the knowing person."

(c) The upādis

This removal of all those things which do not essentially belong to the ātman is concerned with the previously mentioned upādhis; these are the individualizing conditioning factors (or adjuncts, as Thibaut says) which we have encountered in the superimposition of such data as constellate the perceptions of "I" or "mine". Deussen lists[3] as the main types of upādhis: (a) All the things and conditions of the external world; (b) the body which consists of the coarse elements; (c) the indriyas, i.e. the five sense organs (buddhi indriyas) and the five organs of action (karma-indriyas) of the body; (d) manas, also referred to as the inner organ (antaḥkaraṇa), which is also the central organ for both the sense organs (nearly equivalent to the intellect) and the organs of action (nearest to the concept of conscious will, according to Deussen); and (e) the mukhya prāṇa which represents the uniform principle of the unconscious, nutrition-oriented form of life.

It is manas and its two sub-systems (the indriyas), altogether eleven organs, which must in principle interest us here, since, as Deussen mentions,[4] in Śaṅkara's view they comprise the whole complex of conscious life. We should also note that manas is not only used

(3) Deussen, System, pp. 60-61.

(4) Deussen, System, p. 356.

alternatively for antahkarana, but, as Śaṅkara points out (2.3.32), "the internal organ which constitutes the limiting adjunct (upādhi) of the soul is called in different places by different names, such as manas (mind), buddhi (intelligence), vijñāna (knowledge), citta (thought)". He also mentions kāma (desire) as one of its functions. A similar list (2.4.6) includes the ahamkāra (ego-consciousness). Śaṅkara describes its restricted empirical reality in terms of its functional position when he says (2.3.40): "Nor can the agentship which has self-consciousness (ahamkāra) for its antecedent belong to the perceiving principle; for self-consciousness itself is an object of perception....The result of all this is that the agentship of the Self is due to its limiting adjuncts (upādhis) only." He also emphasizes that in accordance with the identity formula ("that art thou", Chānd. 6.8.7, "I am brahman", Bṛh. 1.4.10), "there is in reality no such thing as an individual soul absolutely different from the brahman, but the brahman, in so far as it differentiates itself through the mind (buddhi) and other limiting conditions, is called individual soul, agent, enjoyer" (1.1.31).

Certainly, Śaṅkara's whole idea of wrong superimposition is only possible because the self is also seen as an object in some way. As he says, agentship requires self-consciousness first, but apperception (i.e. the perceiving principle) does not; rather, self-consciousness is just one of the objects of apperception, and is based, in some immaginatory manner, on the upādhis, such as the differentiating mind which makes the brahman appear as ātman. (It is this aspect which irritates Deussen who fears that he would have to give up the personal character of the perceiving principle; see p. 262(2) and pp. 107-109.)

(d) The brahman-ātman postulation and liberation

Commenting on the brahman's unrestricted "that art thou", Śaṅkara explains knowledge qua liberation (jñānan moksah). In this connection he rigorously distinguishes between the wrong knowledge or nescience (avidyā) which is the cause of saṃsāra, and the only real knowledge (vidyā) which removes avidyā or corrects it (2.1.14). Denying the possibility of any differentiated approach to liberation, he asserts:

"The state of final release is nothing but brahman (brahma eva hi mukti-avastha) (3.4.52).

Applying the problem of knowledge to the phenomenon of samsara, Sankara remarks (1.1.4) that someone who is mad enough to believe that his body is his self will necessarily be subjected to pain, fear and other affections. But once he has understood the identity of his self with the brahman he cannot be considered as further subjected to these affections. This identification, as stated by the identity formula, is not merely a form of figurative paralleling, Sankara elaborates, because otherwise the attainment of knowledge could not be reflected by such a phrase as "the fetter of the heart is broken, all doubts are solved" (Mund. 2.2.8; compare p. 202). He concludes: "The knowledge of the brahman does, therefore, not depend on the active energy of man, but is analogous to the knowledge of those things which are the objects of perception, inference, and so on, and thus depends on the object of knowledge only. About such a brahman or its knowledge it is impossible to establish, by reasoning, any connection with actions." Moreover, the object lies already somewhere within the subject: "Nor, again, can it be said that there is a dependence on action in consequence of the brahman or release being something which is to be obtained; for as the brahman constitutes a person's Self it is not something to be attained by that person." Also through (moral) improvement (samskara) liberation cannot be attained, since it consists of identity and not of adding perfection.

On the highest level of knowledge, that of identity, the question of a cause of liberation becomes insubstantial. But inasmuch as the brahman should still be looked upon as an object, the knowledge of it would have to be treated as coming from it itself, since this knowledge cannot count as the result of any human activity. Hence, Sankara, in making a concession to this causal, object-oriented soteriological perspective, resorts to the idea of "grace" (anugraha) (2.3.42). He asks us to assume that, while the Lord, who is the highest Self, tolerates a state of samsara for the ignorant soul, "final release also is affected through knowledge caused by the grace

of the Lord".[5] In similar words Śaṅkara expounds that only through God's grace the identity of God and the self, thus far hidden through ignorance, becomes apparent (3.2.5). He quotes Śvet. 1.11: "When that god is known all fetters fall off; sufferings are destroyed and birth and death cease."

(e) Esoteric and exoteric views: vidyā and avidyā

Śaṅkara's exposition of Vedānta makes use of two complementary aspects of knowledge, vidyā and avidyā, each featuring a different level of validity. The lines of thought which Śaṅkara develops on both these levels are more or less intertwined. Deussen, who spends much effort on separating them, distinguishes a theological, exoterical form of thought and a philosophical, esoterical one.[6] While the exoterical aspect features a lower level of knowledge (aparā vidyā), centred on metaphorical, mythical forms, the esoterical approach, on a higher level (parā vidyā), follows a line of much greater scientific abstraction.

As Śaṅkara himself explains: "The brahman is apprehended under two forms; in the first place as qualified by limiting conditions (upādhi) owing to the multiformity of the evolutions of name and form; in the second place as being the opposite of this, i.e. free from all limiting conditions whatever" (1.1.11). Even though differences (viśeṣa) may be attached to the brahman in general, the param brahma as such (svataḥ) remains unaffected. "In the case of the brahman the limiting adjuncts are, moreover, presented by nescience merely" (3.2.11). Śaṅkara gives an example for a practical connection between

---

(5) In practice, the Śaṅkaran seeker of knowledge (jijñāsu) would still be advised to make his own Yogic effort, consisting of fifteen steps (aṅgāni) incorporating the eight steps of Patañjali (Vimuktananda, Aparokṣānubhūti, pp. 53-67 (vv. 100-126)).

(6) Cf. Deussen, System, pp. 104-105. We should bear in mind that avidyā, appearing for the first time in Indian philosophy together with theology, is potentially good (whereas atheistic Buddhist metaphysics treats it as entirely bad).

his two levels of understanding when he comments (4.3.9): "As the aparam (lower) brahma is in proximity to the higher (param) one, there is nothing unreasonable in the word brahman being applied to the former also. For when the higher brahman is, for the purpose of pious meditation, described as possessing certain effected qualities - such as "consisting of mind" (Chānd. 3.14.2) and the rest - which qualities depend on its connexion with certain pure limiting adjuncts; then it is what we call the lower brahman."

According to one's respective point of view, the brahman can be either the object of knowledge or of ignorance (vidyā-avidyā-visaya). It is from the standpoint (avasthāyām) of ignorance that all occupation with the brahman is concerned with its attributes (guna), differentiations (viśesa) and conditioning factors (upādhi) (1.1.11). In other words, this so-called sagunam brahma must be ranked as avidyā-visaya. Eschatologically speaking, only on the esoterical level (parā vidyā), where the param brahma is seen as nirgunam (attribute-free) brahma and as devoid of any differentiations (viśesa), can there be liberation. Any other level of knowledge has its compensation in samsāra (which may include both the pitryāna and the devayāna) (1.1.24). Śaṅkara comments that on a lower (exoterical) level of knowledge (aparā vidyā) the idea of an attainable aim appears as feasible, as illustrated by the conception of the devayāna (4.2.1; our p. 199). In such a case we may speak of some "going to", whereas, in the case of full knowledge (samyagdarśana), implying an inner identity, we cannot notice any positive aim-oriented purpose. He explains the difference in the attainment of something already present as compared to something newly obtained by asking us to imagine the situation of someone reaching a village as compared to someone's attainment of health after a disease (3.3.30). There is ultimately no "going to" the param brahma, despite its apparent powers (śakti), since essentially it is without any differentiations (viśesa). Inasmuch as there may be found any cosmological references to the brahman as the cause of creation, these are just explanations leading up to the essential identity, as he finds confirmed by such statements

as, from Īśā Up. 7: "What trouble, what sorrow can there be to him who beholds that unity?" (4.3.14). This shows that the absence of error and grief again appears as some significant "outer characteristic" of the "state" of identity.

(3) A meta-view of "identity", māyā and "will"

(a) Avidyā and "identity": Vedāntic change in consciousness

Notwithstanding any approximate philosophical motivations of our Indians and Germans, their philosophical conditions differed fundamentally (compare pp. 18-20). For Śaṅkara his task was laid out: as an Indian thinker he was a commentator within his own autonomous, indirectly isolating, tradition. However, the 19th (and partly 20th) century German philosopher was isolated due to his alienated and personalistic inner attitude which - irrespective of any real achievement - was centred on autonomous personal reflection, even while referring to Indian thought.

When Schopenhauer first claimed the central significance of the identity formula for his own philosophy, he had already extricated it from its original context and adapted it - unknowingly - to his own anthropocentric metaphysical approach. Meta-philosophically, we observe that Śaṅkara, like Schopenhauer, presents his thought in an effort to change a decisive element in our philosophic view of this world. He creates a conceptual background for his argument by describing and analysing the features and mechanisms of our common empirical consciousness, including its inadequacy for seeing reality. In this connection some of Deussen's remarks have been significant. In spite of his indological proficiency, he follows Śaṅkara's lines of thought with Schopenhauerian eyes, plainly suggesting that Śaṅkara's system could be perfected by some Kantian understructure. Deussen frankly describes what he considers as the fundamental fault of Vedānta: Śaṅkara first presents our self, correctly, as the only source through which knowledge can come. But then he assumes, wrongly, that this self should ultimately present itself to our consciousness in the form

of a knowing subject, after the whole intellectual apparatus has been separated as part of the non-self belonging to the world of appearance and imagination.(7) Our meta-perspective allows us to throw some light on the preposterous character of this well-meant idea.(8) Where Deussen imagines an acute deficiency, Śaṅkara proceeds in an unexpected manner. He establishes a provisional basis from which he can extrapolate the nature of a changed form of consciousness implied in his brahman-ātman postulation. Explicating the manner in which we commonly handle the data of which our knowledge consists, he directs our attention to the state of consciousness which ought to result if we could consequently become aware of all our illusory data connections. Deussen senses a paradox in the presumed attempt to gain pure knowledge by removing all the obscuring data structures. But Śaṅkara's brahman-ātman postulation does not imply, as it might have seemed to the Schopenhauerian, any true equivalence to a Kantian perceiving subject or to a thing as such.(9) This postulation puts the emphasis on consciousness, rather than on perception. It is centred on a hypothetical form of consciousness, or more precisely on the consciousness underlying any knowledge in terms of manas, buddhi, vijñāna, citta, etc., or even of Kantian reason. The "new" position of consciousness, to which Śaṅkara guides us, aims to dissolve all previous provisional forms of knowledge and mark them as constituents of māyā.

---

(7) Deussen, System, p. 61.

(8) Hacker traces, as a historical curiosity, the impact which Schopenhauer's and Deussen's "pseudo-Vedāntic tat-tvam-asi-ethics", reimported by such neo-Vedāntins as Vivekananda, had on modern Indian thought (cf. Schoph., pp. 385, 391, 396).

(9) In fact, Deussen deplores that Śaṅkara "lacks" Kant's view of the subjectivity of our time-space perception, i.e. a separation into "empirical" and "as such" views, and that, unlike Schopenhauer, he uses no personalistic separations, but only a separation of levels (System, p. 117(63)).

In the interest of our meta-view, we must be aware of the fundamental difference between identification through perception and identification through superimposition. While Deussen wants to suggest, even for Vedānta, that knowledge should be considered restricted by our faculty of perception in a strictly Kantian sense, Śaṅkara holds that we superimpose our selves wrongly on ultimately irrelevant things. Deussen, and the other Schopenhauerians, come equipped with their selves (representing some stage of the manifestation of a real but blind will), convinced that any subject-object relation (fundamental to each individual being) is painful, hence all the suffering. In Śaṅkara's view the omnipotent brahman, playing some ambivalent game, allows people to think that their true existence and identity lies in a functional interrelation or connection of empirical data. They refer to this interrelating process on the basis of what appears to them as self. Their real self, however, is obscured by this process. If this obscuring relationship is disconnected, these limiting factors lose their influence over one's self-identification. Higher knowledge cannot destroy anything, but only change our manner of seeing and being. (In Buddhism empirical consciousness was the chief reason for actually getting rid of the universe.) It brings out our true identity and our true self (param ātman), which have always existed, although hidden under some pseudo-self (aparam ātman). Śaṅkara's description of this change does not purport any optimism or pessimism.

The mentioned brahman-ātman postulation is not part of the higher knowledge as such, but only part of an attempt of commenting on it. In other words, Śaṅkara's changing aspects of knowledge and self are still based on his entirely philosophical approach. He analyses and sorts out the distracting or obscuring factors in our empirical consciousness by treating them as producers of data and as means of reasoning (which implies māyā as a prerequisite of knowledge). But after the complete removal of these factors there should be no further ground for such reasoning. The knowledge of the self would then be completely different; in fact, some totally dissimilar expression could be invented to refer to this new state of consciousness. The

only essential connection between the different levels of knowledge would exist in their relative existence. From Śaṅkara's point of view it is we who surround the ātman and the brahman with differentiating descriptions, but only because we are trying to explore why there appears to be a difference to begin with. In the course of that exploration the mentioned connecting line between the two levels is supposed to vanish in favour of a clarified view of identity, since after all there is no "going to".(10) When Śaṅkara heuristically behaves as if he could stretch himself beyond his own self, i.e. beyond all empirical upādhi-bound closed-circuit knowledge, he does this in an attempt to show what is alredy there, but is seen from the point of view of a param ātman. Practically, the withdrawal of our attention from this circuit effects a fundamental change, namely the complete desisting of that - formerly "our" - erroneous self-limitation.

(b) Māyā: principle of individuation

Śaṅkara describes the common empirical consciousness in various manners: most generally as saṃsāra, but also as some dreamlike illusion (māyā) or as self-deception through wrong attachment due to ignorance. He explains the mechanism of this self-deception by referring to qualities (dharma) being wrongly superimposed from the subject onto the object. Practically speaking, avidyā ultimately manifests itself in our erroneous manner of connecting our presumed self with the various data of our perception including our own body. Yet Śaṅkara does not deny some relative validity to this empirical individuality. After all, it does form an integral part of the indicated change of consciousness to some higher state of truth.

This includes māyā as a necessary prerequisite. In Vedānta the concept of māyā represents a principle of a certain way of seeing. When it is assumed that this perspective, being unreal, can be overcome in a positive way, māyā appears clearly as a symptom of truth, which

(10) Ghate (Vedānta, p. 22): "The reality is to be attained not by reasoning (tarka), but by introspective realization (anubhava)."

should actually preclude it from any such interpretation as we have encountered in Schopenhauer, who changes its meaning from Vedāntic to overtly negative (see p. 54). If there is any aspect of "uselessness" in māyā, then it should be on the level of playfulness (līlā) where, however, the question of purpose would lead ad absurdum.

If we ask ourselves if māyā in Vedānta could be equivalent to Schopenhauer's Vorstellung (imagination), we must recall that in Schopenhauer all those objectionable Vorstellungen of the world veiled by "maya" mark a very real aspect of objectification in the evolvement of a blind and ultimately useless will. This evolvement from a stage of unmanifested unity to the plurality of "maya" features the principle of individuation. As long as there is will, unnegated, there is suffering. Schopenhauer's "maya" is the principle which lets us have, and lures us into having, our Vorstellungen, which all are wrong on some level or other. It is the principle which underlies the will's "wrong" willing, its own willing to see wrongly. If we ignore for a moment this role of the will and the aspect of reality attached to it, we may say that both Schopenhauer's and Śaṅkara's māyā "makes" us see wrongly inasmuch as it actualizes the network of deceptive orientation points for the perceiving subject. But while Schopenhauer concentrates on the fatal course of the will which a priori leads - or rather misleads - into the Vorstellungen, Śaṅkara simply refers to a common error due to avidyā and which, moreover, becomes irrelevant in the light of a higher consciousness. In either case, without māyā the individuals would not be caught up (trapped or deluded) in the appearance of things but instead would look right through to their respective essences, either unmotivated blind volition or pure consciousness. From a Śaṅkaran point of view, the principle of individuation sustains an unreal world which distracts us from a problemless state of consciousness; in Schopenhauer it marks a subjective level of reality where personal seeing and suffering, synonymously, produce consciousness which can only be "imported" negatively. We can now answer that Schopenhauer's "maya" is not a force which substantially produces or feeds imagination (that would be the will), nor is it identical with imagination; it is,

negatively speaking, the obscuring and restrictive principle of appearance which prevents the immediate negation of the will by itself, and it is, positively speaking, a stabilizer and a device which "makes the trap work" in sustaining our self-identification on an imaginary level of very concrete conflict. Thereby "maya" restricts us to a sphere in which suffering forms an accepted part of reality inasmuch as it may be connected with a culturally accepted form of the world. This is the very kind of acceptance from which Schopenhauer wants to separate himself. In fact, Schopenhauer distinctly demonstrates that kind of un-Vedāntic alienation which may be considered a prerequisite for the European philosopher in general.

According to Śaṅkara all that is distinct (viśista) is māyā. Vedānta (like Buddhism apart from some peripheral sections) uses māyā in a sense which conforms with Schopenhauer's definition based on Kant's Erscheinung (phenomenon) and as principium individuationis. But Śaṅkara's concept of māyā is vaster and more objective than that of Schopenhauer. Only in its most important aspect is it reducible to the principle of individuation. On the whole it also expands to other human ideas, such as the cosmological conception of the world as play (līlā), or, as the causeless work of the brahman figuring as a māyāvin. In this play, the individuational principle offers no firm ground for any personal alienation or self-negation.

The most prominent and typically Indian example for Śaṅkara's category of individuality emerges with the ātman representing, in certain situations of identification or equivalence, an individual aspect of the brahman. Meta-psychologically, tat tvam asi implies for Śaṅkara some transformation to its actuality, some movement from the brahman to the ātman. The facts that we have complete illusion in māyā (the brahman alone being true) or that truly conscious perception excludes any personal principle indicate that this category of individuality appears here in a negative aspect, i.e., in the sphere of non-reality.[11] For Schopenhauer the suffering on the level of

[11] For both the Buddha and Śaṅkara "the self is a mental construction" (Radhakrishnan, Br.Sū., p. 144).

individuation is of real and personal importance. The Schopenhauerians would rather suffer than change the individuality of their conscious state. Similarly, Gebser's changing ego-structures, so significant for his thought, are something very real for him (hence his worry about certain Indian attitudes of "submersion", "retreat" or "reversal of birth"). Even when he associates Indian thought with a "dreamlike, mythical form of self-identification", he does not touch upon Śaṅkara's dream metaphors which merely serve to illustrate his concept of māyā. Schopenhauer's dream analogies, as we saw, come - with due restriction to his own specific sphere of "maya" - very near to those of Śaṅkara.

These different approaches may be linked together by attaching them to one common meta-category of individuality, which can harbour different conceptions of identity on a basis of change. For Schopenhauer, and for Gebser, the most serious part of their problem arises with the empirical side of the world and our dependent state of self-identification. While Gebser claims as the only sensible option for mankind a distinct anthropological-historical change, Schopenhauer wants, on a purely metaphysical basis, radical existential change. For Śaṅkara any empirical aspect - māyā, play - is secondary. His aspiration goes towards what from a European point of view may, at first sight, seem to be a transcendent level, but which, as we have seen, essentially presents an immanent and psychological problem. It is not an epistemological one, as Deussen's reference to Kant implied, nor is Śaṅkara engaged in a metaphysical portrayal of the causality of suffering, as in the case of Schopenhauer, but he wants to explore what affects our consciousness in terms of an ātman-brahman relation.

(c) The implication of "will" in connection with Śaṅkara's empirical data

Śaṅkara says that our habitual way of seeing the world must necessarily convey a wrong meaning to us, because, with the help of individualizing conditioning factors (upādhi), we erroneously superimpose the wrong qualities (dharma) onto everything. He meticulously describes the

mechanism of this erroneous process. However, he does not explicitly name any principle of intentionality behind it.[12] The brahman, rather, in a way connives it all. Operating like a magician (māyāvin), it leaves the cause of seeing and accepting the world as māyā with us, the onlookers. This makes it easy to rule out the Upanisadic icchā (desire). Nor can avidyā be the will, or merely the will, as we shall soon see.

Intentionality is always there. However, it has no firmly established semantic unit in Indian philosophy. We may find that it plays some implicit role in the jñāna of Vedānta. All brahman-ātman postulation, as we note it in Saṅkara (but not in the Upanisads) can only exist as "not outside myself", i.e., not outside my personal form of seeing and knowing (pp. 259-260, 264-265, 270). This knowledge implies, from our point of view, some personal form of intentionality, since it can only be aspired to through some structure of personality. Hence, any intentionality within this conception of knowledge brings us right back to ourselves and the māyā of our individuality. Knowledge, which in the Upanisads is conceived "as such" (p. 205), instead in Saṅkara becomes part of some "system" (darśana). The implied intentionality, which means some form of "will" in a Saṅkaran sense, has a simple connecting function. It is merely required to bring together such data as we have discussed in the case of "my friends" (p. 261), namely, the fact that they may appear as friends - māyā - and in addition even as my friends - more māyā. But this māyā is not chaotic. Instead, the qualities (dharma) involved follow the coordination of some "will". The resulting attachment on an empirical level (death of friends etc.) and on a soteriological level (active liberation) is of course bad and altogether the consequence of avidyā.

---

(12) Otto's influential opinion that Saṅkara, a quasi-contemporary of Eckhart, aims at "the complete termination of will and action" is certainly too much of a formal reversal of Eckhart's mystical unification of the individual will with an active universal will (Mystik, pp. 3, 241-242).

In Buddhism the concept of avidyā presents a complicated structure with an emphasis on suffering as its final result. In Vedānta avidyā is more objective and less individual or personal than in Buddhism, nearer to the European concept of (ignorant) nature: not bad, just ontologically predetermined. For Śaṅkara avidyā is more a matter of wrong identification, of wrong obscuring data connection, where suffering plays a far less cardinal role. The will, with regard to its connective function, does not even occupy what could be described as a facet of the structure of avidyā, but only an edge of it. Will is not an Indian category. But there is something in each Indian darśana which by way of analysis could be identified with will, but not the other way around. We must not seek - and cannot find - such a concept in India. Yet it should be possible to find something which would be what we call or would call will. For instance, desire (icchā) is a facet of ignorance (avidyā), one edge of which would represent for us, under the circumstances and as long as the context permits, the faceless, conceptless form of will. Nevertheless, our approach should be as literal, hermeneutically speaking, as possible.(13)

If we look at the concept of "my body" as featuring some quality (dharma), or just quality in general, we feel that the various worldly discrepancies (viśiṣṭa) (resulting from the impact of māyā on us) are meant to be sorted out by some conscious effort. We might find the Vedāntic variant of the necessary personal intentionality attached to, or part of the potential of, such concepts as manas (already somewhat more vaguely suggested by Deussen), comparable, in this regard, to the saṃskāras of Buddhism. While in Buddhism we find that empirical data are recognized and evaluated in order to put an (ultimate) stop to the process of Dependent Origination, we might discover a Śaṅkaran aspect of intentionality, the edge of will, in such a process as that of putting various data together, such as "my body" and "my body", and ultimately even those data of tat tvam asi. On the basis of knowing how these data come together, the effort of

(13) Cf. p. 7, Gadamer's double understanding: stepwise (circular) and in an overall manner; literal steps, and exceeding the original expression.

disconnecting them and sorting them out, i.e., the effort to regain complete clarity of the meaning of tat tvam asi, could be made.

In India empirical consciousness is deemed to become stabilized in the course of spiritual and mental progress. This "psychological" stabilization - through the propaedeutic function of yoga (compare pp. 251-254) - is of the greatest importance. It is of a practical nature unlike the theoretical stabilizers introduced by the Germans. According to Kant and his followers our perception of the world is essentially determined by its epistemological limitations. Hence Schopenhauer saw in negation the only way "out" (while Gebser tried to accomodate himself by redefining his real identity). India expresses no such doubt regarding the practical value of our perceptive mechanism: we can and must make proper use of it. It is essentially good. But it must be cleaned "psychologically" by disconnecting and removing the wrong elements.

In Buddhism, what is wanted is some sort of ethical balance between body and spirit (as compared to Schopenhauer's ethical pessimism). Hence it is not necessarily bad to have a body, it is only a nuisance. Buddhism is explicitly more concerned with suffering than Vedānta, where the emphasis lies more on the knowledge of reality. Buddhist spiritual wisdom (prajñā) is, therefore, not approached like Vedāntic jñāna or vidyā. While Buddhism aims at stopping a process of Dependent Origination, Śaṅkara wants to change a wrong orientation (avidyā) by withdrawing the attention from the self-limiting factors (data) and shifting it "somewhere else". The intended stopping in Buddhism aims at a certain knowledge with regard to nirvāna which, however, bears no positive ontological description. Vedānta speaks of some divine knowledge (vidyā) of something, i.e., some ontological state described as infinite, completed, unachievable, but in itself achieved. Its actualization, to which Śaṅkara refers as "grace", seems to amount essentially to what in Buddhism we have described as ontological Awakening (p. 253). The actualization of this balanced state of consciousness may appear as the result of some disconnected, pure intentionality. But if we accept this balance as an ontological

state, we cannot describe it as being a result of either real or illusory causality, since balance implies absence of intention. Consciousness in a Saṅkaran sense refers to a pure, transformed state which has left the psychological sphere behind. In this connection avidyā (unlike in Classical Yoga, p. 284) is not a meta-psychological category either, but rather of a universal, cosmogonic nature.

Intentionality in the Schopenhauerians differs from that in Indian thought in more than one respect. In India, will is not present in any primarily given postulation (unlike, e.g., icchā); will, qua "edge", is a derived, secondary category. In Schopenhauer's case will is an ontological postulation representing a universal category. Together with "maya" it functions as an important stabilizer in his philosophy: Schopenhauer derives the distinctly negative character of the will from what he sees it perform on the level of individuation, i.e., from his personal, cultural view of the world as "maya". Personality and suffering are inexorably and indissoluably linked through the will. But in India will and individuality are deprived of reality by definition. Will in Saṅkara becomes part of the brahman's play. It is part of māyā. Meta-philosophically speaking, he is not challenged by any real and bad will which could be negated; instead, he wants to avoid the connections produced by an illusory, false will.

Chapter Nine

Classical Yoga: experiential de-identification

(1) Disciplined inspiration and confirmation

The practical Indian "withdrawal" from life, as especially Schopenhauer, Spengler and Gebser felt it, has its most direct systematic expression in Yoga. In fact, it is through Yoga that most other lines of the Indian tradition acknowledge the possibility of an experiential control or support of their own central pursuit.(1) This suggests to us that we concentrate on a narrow space within the sphere of Yoga in which the presumed connections between the empirical and the metaphysical, or, more accurately speaking, the meta-psychological and the meta-ontological, offer some explanations of distinct comparative interest.

Yoga (included in Buddhism right from the beginning) emerges as an independent system (darśana) only in post-classical times.(2) However, its systematized principles and core elements can already be found in Patañjali's Yogasūtras (considered by Frauwallner as representing the old Yoga branch of Sāmkhya). Classical Yoga, as

---

(1) Werner, Yoga, pp. x, 15. Radhakrishnan, Phil.II, p. 342: "Every system of thought utilizes the methods of Yoga in its own interests."

(2) Frauwallner, Ind.Phil.I, pp. 408-410.

presented by Patañjali, does not rely on a strictly theoretical approach to knowledge. Moreover, as Karel Werner assures us, "upon the whole it is more elaborate and summarizes the actual technique of Yoga procedures more exactly than the Buddhist exposition".(3) With a glance to its possible history, Deussen sees in it the natural consequence of certain Upanisadic insights such as the one that "the knower does not know, the non-knower knows" (see p. 201, Kena Up.).(4) In metaphysical terms, he feels, Yoga takes its origin from the fact that suffering can be found in everything (sarvam duhkham eva vivekinah) (Sūtras 2.15). In Yoga, as in Buddhism and Vedānta, the cause of suffering is seen in avidyā.(5)

Shifting the emphasis from the "metaphysical" to a more "psychological" aspect, the functional basis of Classical Yoga, as contained in the part known as kriyā yoga, has been succinctly described by Georg Feuerstein(6) as "the combined practice of ascesis (tapas), self-study (svādhāya) and devotion to the Lord (īśvara-pranidhāna)".(7) He presents as the aim of this endeavour some "enstatic consciousness (in samādhi)" which is free of the common mistaken kind of empirical

(3) Werner, Yoga, p. 131. Patañjali, while trying to present a uniform work in accordance with his own view, takes various Yoga traditions into consideration (cf. Oberhammer, Strukt., p. 134; Dasgupta, Y.Phil., p. 51).

(4) According to Hauer (Anfänge, pp. 186, 201), the development of Classical Yoga receives its main impulse from the ecstatic practice of the Vrātyas supplemented by Brahmanical ecstasis. Werner (Yoga, pp. 100-102) considers the evolutionary view of the origin of Yoga as outmoded; conceptual elaboration (Patañjali) indicates no experiential superiority.

(5) Deussen, A.G.Phil.I.3, pp. 543, 549.

(6) We use as a guide Georg Feuerstein's Philosophy of Classical Yoga (based on the Pātañjalayogasūtram), an eloquent reflection of the prevailing modern interpretations of the subject.

(7) Kriyā yoga, the Yogic action which revolves around this combined practice, specializes in the systematic destruction of the kleśas (defilements); it has been ranked as a correction or, at least, supplement of the comprehensive yogāṅga text.

self-identity.[8] Quite practically, Yoga wants to transform "the ordinary consciousness by way of centralizing and uniting the consciousness process".[9] Primarily, Yoga would regulate this process in conformity with its unquestioned Indian background. This condition is also in some way appreciated by Feuerstein, who - inspired by Gebser - adds that Yoga is "anchored in the mythic consciousness structure" (compare pp. 152-153, 173). This interesting assumption, together with the question of the general accessibility of Yoga, shall concern us later.

If we were to follow some general mystical conception of the yogic kind of "consummative experience" (samādhi), such as, for instance, Bharati has portrayed for us, the ultimate objective of Yoga would appear to be analogous, if not identical, to that of Vedānta or Buddhism.[10] Philosophically, however, Classical Yoga uses its own specific approach in determining the positions and nature of the various constituents and mechanisms which sustain this world. It thereby clears its own route towards the intended enstatic change in consciousness. Since it is this "theory" which finally decides what "is" or "is not", we cannot exclude the theoretical aspect from the overall objective of Yoga. Therefore, we propose to treat, if not mystically, then philosophically, the tradition of Yoga as a distinct and independent phenomenon of Indian philosophy.[11]

---

(8) Eliade (Yoga, pp. 58, 86-87) renders samādhi as "enstatic experience" or "enstasis", paraphrasing it as "this contemplative state in which the thought grasps immediately the form of the object without the help of categories and of imagination". It represents the last link (aṅga) in the classical chain of eight classes of propaedeutic practices.

(9) Feuerstein, Essence, p. 23.

(10) Similarly, Eliade's general reference to "absolute freedom" and "liberation from suffering" as the aim of all Indian philosophies (Yoga, pp. 12, 24, 168) is acceptable only outside of any specific context.

(11) Feuerstein (Class., pp. ix, 111) and others hold that Patañjali Yoga was derived side by side with Sāṃkhya from a common root, some

In our following brief exposition we draw on a small number of accepted patterns in the structural interrelationship of Yogic concepts. The contexts and concepts we are most interested in are the ones which (a) play a significant role in the principal understanding of the philosophy of Yoga; and (b) at the same time allow us to develop our hermeneutic connection with the German thought in question.

(2) Supports and movement of the Yogic process

(a) Consciousness focused on awareness

Classical Yoga on the whole recognizes three major meta-ontological principles: Yogic conceptions of God (īśvara), the Self (puruṣa) and the world (prakṛti). The first principle apparently represents some formal apex where Yogic theory and practice meet. In addition, īśvara may be looked upon philosophically as some special or parallel form of the Self, a puruṣa sui generis as Feuerstein says, or perhaps as "a mere primus inter pares" as Deussen prefers to put it. It plays a more prominent role in the practical structure of Yoga, figuring as an "archetypal yogin" or proto-model featured by some "ontic co-essentiality" with man's inmost Self (puruṣa).[12]

Emphasizing the pre-eminently practical orientation of Yoga, Feuerstein proposes an experiential derivation of the concept of the Self (puruṣa) based on some not empirically observable datum. He rejects the possibility of any direct experience of this puruṣa (the Yoga and Sāṃkhya "synonym" for ātman) because of its radical dualistic separation from the non-self (or prakṛti).[13] The Self may be

---

Sāṃkhya-Yoga. Werner (Yoga, p. 132) places the composition of the Sūtras any time between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D., their essential material partly even before the time of the Buddha. Also cf. Woods, Yoga-System, p. ix; Hauer, Yoga, pp. 238-239; Eliade, Yoga, pp. 364-366; Tech.du Yoga, pp. 25-27.

(12) Feuerstein, Class., pp. 12-15; Deussen, A.G.Phil.I.3, p. 546.

(13) Feuerstein, Class., pp. 15-20.

considered as an aspatial and atemporal reality. But, unlike the ātman in Advaita-Vedānta, it is in no way involved in any conceivable relation to the empirical world; it is consciousness in itself as opposed to consciousness of something. What is here called "consciousness-of" has to be understood as a function of the mental apparatus, hence, as an evolute of the insentient world-ground (prakṛti) and as an operative constituent of the empirical world. Due to the obscuring influence of the empirical consciousness man loses his transcendental identity, or the authenticity of himself as such, while the fluctuation of his states of experience prevents any stable self-identification. Ideally, the Self - which does not intend, feel or think - could be perceived by a mind unobstructed by the effects of the empirical consciousness. Instead, the mind is usually caught up in some perpetual production of false identities (known as asmitā or "I-am-ness"). The power or principle which sustains this process is said to be generated by or derived from nescience (avidyā). In other words, avidyā can be interpreted as the root of the correlation (saṃyoga) between Self and non-self or world. This erroneous correlation is inevitably linked with suffering (duḥkha).[14]

An important key to the meta-psychological aspect of the problem can be found in the concept of kleśa, which has been rendered as "the cause-of-affliction" (i.e., in connection with our impaired self-understanding). Feuerstein refers to five specific variants or dynamizing sub-principles of kleśa, namely, nescience (avidyā), "I-am-ness" (asmitā), attachment (rāga), aversion (dveṣa) and the "will-to-live" (abhiniveśa).[15] It is the uncontrolled interaction of these emotional and motivational forces, rooted in avidyā, which

---

(14) Soteriologically, the function of Yogic duḥkha partly resembles that of Vedāntic māyā. Eliade (Yoga, p. 24), observing a positive, stimulating value in the Yogic conception of "suffering" as the law of existence, refers to it as the conditio sine qua non of liberation.

(15) These five "psychomental-state(citta vṛtti)-producing matrixes" are incessantly fluctuating due to the presence of residual forces (vāsanās) (Eliade, Yoga, pp. 51-52).

accounts for our suffering. This meta-psychological (or even meta-ontological) principle of avidyā does not have the cosmogonic function emphasized in Advaita-Vedānta (p. 278), but simply means the non-understanding "that consciousness-of (citta) is an epiphenomenon of the transcendental Self-Awareness". In order to stop the causal influence of avidyā these kleśas must be attenuated by the cultivation of a radical consciousness change culminating in the enstatic state of samādhi.(16)

(b) Prakṛti: rearrangement of its guṇas and its level of individuation

One could say that Classical Yoga is essentially a story of the dynamics of the guṇas within prakṛti. Observing the two cardinal dimensions in the meaning of prakṛti, Feuerstein interprets it (1) as a noumenal matrix of creation, also called aliṅga; and (2) as the realm of the multitudinous phenomena of contingent existence, which in turn comprises (a) an empirical "surface structure" and (b) a "deep structure" reserved to yogic introspection although logically deducible from empirical data (i.e., presumably approachable from a meta-psychological angle). All phenomena are considered transformations (pariṇāma) of the world ground (prakṛti). According to the prakṛti-pariṇāma-vāda, the principal Yoga view on causality (shared with Sāṃkhya and the older schools of Vedānta), the Many evolves from the One. (In Saṅkara's Advaita-Vedānta all transformations happen in the empirical world, figuring as a mere appearance (vivarta) of an essentially different and unchangeable cause, the brahman.) In Yoga (as in Sāṃkhya) these transformations are based on rearrangements of the basic or primary constituents of prakṛti, the so-called guṇas. This includes everything, except puruṣa which by definition is nir-guṇa. (We notice a certain resemblance regarding the esoterical level of Vedānta where the param brahma was described as nir-guṇa, p. 267).(17)

According to Feuerstein there must be an infinite

(16) Feuerstein, Class., pp. 64-65, 85.

(17) Feuerstein, Class., pp. 29, 32.

number[18] of gunas, which (here he refers to S. Dasgupta) "are not merely qualities or properties, but actual entities or 'reals'". Yoga divides these gunas into three types, known as sattva (being-ness, or the principle of existence), rajas (energy-stuff, or the principle of discontinuity and change) and tamas (mass-stuff, or that which denies annihilation through change, or the principle of continuity). Both in empirical reality and according to yogic introspection, the world process depends on the dynamic interaction of those three types of gunas.[19] On the assumption that "the trained yogin" is in command of a specific faculty of introspection, Feuerstein considers such concepts as prakrti or the gunas as experientially derived. (He, too, sees the initial impulse of Indian philosophical tradition as some form of mystical experience when he asks: "For what is the foundation of the authority of the scriptures if not "revelation" in the sense of the experience of reality in non-ordinary states of consciousness (such as meditation or samādhi)?") From a practical or empirical point of view, these gunas are shaped or "bodied forth" into the elements (ether, air, etc.) and senses (bhūta-indriya-ātmakam), i.e., the "surface structure" of prakrti, representing an "ontic" level to which Patañjali refers to as viśesa (particularized). (On this level are correlated manas (mind), the ten indriyas (senses) and the five bhūtas (elements).)[20]

---

(18) Humphries (Review, p. 393) objects that "the gunas are modes of being, not specific substances - three of them can make up the infinite variety of the universe". Neither view seems to allow for a meta-psychological perspective.

(19) Schopenhauer knew the three gunas from his own cautious study of Wilson's translation of the Sāmkhya-Kārikā. Quite typically, he interpreted them as distinctly volitional principles underlying the three respective characterological extremes observes by him in human life: raja-guna as the mighty passionate willing, sattva-guna as pure ingenious cognition freed from its subservience to the will, tama-guna as empty yearning and life-stifling lethargy of the will (W.W.I, § 58, p. 402).

(20) Feuerstein, Class., pp. 34-43.

Separately, in assessing the "deep structure" of prakṛti, all three types of guṇas are approached on three different "ontic" levels (guṇa parvans): aviśeṣa (the unparticularized), liṅga mātra (the differentiated) and aliṅga (the signless, i.e., the undifferentiated). Feuerstein's pro forma differentiation of aliṅga as natura naturans and its nearest evolute, liṅga mātra, as natura naturata recalls Schopenhauer's Eurocentric Sāṃkhya interpretation. In order to "make sense of it", Schopenhauer had matched prakṛti on the whole with will in its role as natura naturans and puruṣa with his subject of cognition, while suggesting a common, though lost, root principle for the two.(21) But such a monistic basis would have only changed, not proved the problem of an Indian equivalence.

The aviśeṣa category is of more specific interest. It accomodates (in correlation with the five tanmātras or potentials) the principle of asmitā-mātra (the "substratum-of-I-am-ness"), representing something like a Patañjalian principle of individuation within the one prakṛti, differentiating and pluralizing the indeterminate and universal principle of being (sattāmātra).(22) Feuerstein further refers to asmitā-mātra as "that agency which splits the primary substratum into subjects vis-à-vis objects in the form of a bifurcate line of evolution". He then draws our attention to a significant distinction between asmitā-mātra and asmitā as representing the "ontological" (structural) and the "psychological" (functional) aspect, respectively, of the same concept. Patañjali's introduction of the term asmitā-mātra, "the pre-individualized ontic reality of subjectivity", supersedes that of ahaṃkāra, which had ambiguously stood for both "individualized ego-consciousness" and "pre-individualized generic principle of egohood". Feuerstein feels that this latter aspect, now rendered by the term asmitā-mātra, was anticipated by the Upaniṣadic aham bahu syām (may I be many) (Chānd. 4.2.3), a dictum in which we have noticed one of the earliest Indian expressions of intentionality (p. 199), although not in a yogic sense.

(21) Schopenhauer, P.P.II, § 187, p. 440. Von Glasenapp, Indb., p. 76, together with Deussen and Dasgupta, looks favourably at this idea.

(22) Feuerstein, Class., p. 46.

(c) Emancipation and identity

It is our psychosomatic condition which, on the empirical level, allows or even induces our quest of the Self. At the same time the natural presence of its prakrtic constituents hampers our direct cognition. Yoga, in analysing the problem of emancipation (apavarga), singles out and develops a specific aspect of liberated seeing known as kaivalya. It may be derived from kevala, "the alone", which for Feuerstein also implies "the self". Hence he defines: "Kaivalya is primarily the 'aloneness [of seeing (of the Self)]' and only secondarily, and by implication, aloneness in the sense of emancipation....Kaivalya is thus the exact antithesis of samyoga or 'correlation', which refers to the Self's function as 'seer' of the contents of consciousness." Purusa, in the present Yogic context also referred to as pure Awareness, figures as a totally separate witness of the prakrtic transformations which abut on their own specific level of consciousness-of (citta). Feuerstein considers this axiom as "derived from yogic noumenous experiencing and therefore also only experientially verifiable".(23)

Similar to Advaita-Vedānta, Yoga places man's true identity in some Self rather than in his empirical consciousness. On this quasi-ontological basis of self-identification man is, in principle, always free. Hence, meta-ontologically, we need not think of any actual attainment in the sense of "going to" a Self which we have already got (compare p. 271). But, meta-psychologically speaking, yogic "pure Awareness" (as much as Śaṅkara's "highest consciousness") is devoid of any traces of empirical consciousness and identity. For all practical purposes we may, therefore, say that the "state" of emancipation (apavarga) is not a state of consciousness, or, as Feuerstein puts it, "man ceases to be man as we know him" (compare p. 242: he sees the universe differently; pp. 253, 277). Regarding the elusive principle on which the yogin does actually link up with his ultimate Self-identification, it is suggested that "consciousness-of is in a way a function of pure Awareness and prakrti combined". This ontological cum psychological condition would point towards some

(23) Feuerstein, Class., pp. 51-53.

meta-psychological[24] basis of our view of yogic change. By attempting practically to remove all prakṛtic "veils" (āvaraṇa) or "defilements" (doṣa) from his actual consciousness, the yogin hopes to shift his self-identification onto a level which a priori represents that of pure Awareness. Psychologically, this would appear as a dual process of de-conditioning (vairāgya) with some parallel or subsequent re-conditioning (abhyāsa). However, since with the consummation of this psychological de-identification process the prakṛtic basis of all experiential processes must be disbanded, the final result, kaivalya, cannot logically amount to any form of experience in the usual sense of the word. Furthermore, ontologically, any (re-)identification on the basis of some equation with puruṣa or union with īśvara (as in the Bhagavadgītā) is precluded by the co-essential and absolutely separate position of those entities. But, having demonstrated that, from a Yogic point of view, kaivalya could neither be anything separate from the Self nor a condition or quality of it or goal for it, Feuerstein finds himself compelled to conclude: "It is simply an empirical construct invented to mark off the Self as postulated in the mesh of psycho-somatic existence from the Self as 'verified' after the pseudo-event of liberation."[25] Returning to our own comparative perspective, we must add that meta-philosophically the "psychological" core of this "pseudo-event" would still have to rank as some form of yogic event: if not psychologically, in terms of some tangible psychological experience, then ontologically, in terms beyond any formal concepts.

(3) A meta-view of "subjective Yogic negation"

(a) Consciousness transformation within a dualistic framework

The philosophy of Classical Yoga operates above all with two initially postulated entities: the principle of consciousness in juxtaposition with that of non-consciousness (which is not the same as

---

(24) Feuerstein is fully aware of the fact that there is no synonym for our concept of "psychology" in Yoga and that such divisions have an entirely analytical function (cf. Class., p. 57).

(25) Feuerstein, Class., 54-56, 78.

unconsciousness). The concept of īśvara, which occupies some conventional position, is mentioned, but not much dealt with. Yoga, like Sāmkhya, but unlike Vedānta or Buddhism, is dualistic,[26] or relatively dualistic (prakṛti might be treated as neutral except with regard to puruṣa, while bondage[27] might be looked upon as a third factor on the same level). Meta-philosophically, this dualism can be established in a manner of which the Indian thinkers at the time may not have been aware themselves. When we refer to three ontological principles in accordance with their inner structure, then, we do this from a very detached point of view. Looking more closely at the actual Yogic pursuit, we notice that these three principles are not necessarily on exactly the same level. In fact, only two principles are directly involved in the Yogic consciousness transformation; the empirical "consciousness-of" changes to the trans-empirical "pure Awareness". Practically, this trans-empirical Awareness amounts to non-consciousness, inasmuch as it is no consciousness any longer.

Meta-philosophically speaking, the Yogic pusuit of kaivalya is motivated and sustained by two aspects of belief (disregarding the possibility of any unquestioned and unnamed fundamentals of the tradition). From a meta-psychological angle we observe that the notion of kaivalya receives a primary empirical impulse from some psychosomatic experience. Meta-ontologically the notion rests essentially on the fundamental postulates of puruṣa, which is without any qualities, and prakṛti. On the level of the almost ontological prakṛti we encounter such quasi-ontologically derived sub-principles as avidyā, asmita, duhkha. Functioning as secondary categories in the context of Classical Yoga, these concepts provide a formal basis and structural framework for an immanent propaedeutic meta-psychological "consciousness technology".

---

(26) This is not contradicted by Hauer's remark (Yoga, p. 208) that "regardless of any transformations, Yoga always remains theistic".

(27) Frauwallner (Ind.Phil.I, p. 377) sees "a mutual dependence, a bond of mutual interest (autsukya)".

(b) Response mechanisms: Schopenhauerian negation and Yogic stabilization

Vaguely, some subjective access to "negation", handled best by the yogin, had already been surmised by Schopenhauer, who writes: "Methodically posturing himself, he (the yogin) retracts all his senses, forgets the whole world and himself too: what then still remains in his consciousness is the primeval entity (Urwesen)." And from within his own metaphysical universe he adds: "Only, the thing is more easily said than done."(28) It is the Indian approach to this aspect of doing which seems of crucial hermeneutic importance to us. We therefore intend to examine to which extent we can meta-philosophically parallel the characterological culture impulse which effects Schopenhauer's metaphysical negation with the "psychosomatic" impulse which effects the yogin's consciousness transformation and stabilization.

In asking ourselves about potential participation of Yoga in the metaphysical pessimistic outlook and the principal accessibility of Yoga from outside its tradition, we shall again first concentrate on some of our comparative key concepts. Both the Schopenhauerian and the Yogic outlook are directed towards a radical change involving some form of annihilation. Schopenhauer, propounding total negation, derives all categories from the one will. In Yoga, puruṣa and prakṛti are two, and, formally, "negation" remains unilaterally confined to the second category. From a non-Patañjalian or perhaps Śaṅkaran point of view, Schopenhauer might have appeared distinctly monistic. However, faintly there looms a certain "dualism" in Schopenhauer's negation of all the imagined world: he implicitly also allows for a featureless ontological category, which, strictly speaking, could not be described or directly mentioned (see nihil negativum, p. 58). Nevertheless, his conception of the will does mark his ultimate metaphysical limit, whereas Yogic dualism avoids this kind of self-limitation by explicitly including a quality-less, limitless principle. Unaware of any actual Indian trend towards monism, as in Advaita-Vedānta, Schopenhauer seriously suggested that puruṣa and prakṛti once must have had a common root rather resembling his own concept of will. As it stands, any parallel to the various dynamic aspects of the

(28) Schopenhauer, P.P.II, § 189, pp. 441-442; cf. our p. 56.

will must be sought along the evolutionary line of prakṛti, including the question of negation. Yoga possesses, of course, no basis for any cultural-ontological negation of will. Instead, it pursues some quasi-psychological-ontological re-identification through shifting the centre of self-identification from a restrictive existential principle to a non-restrictive non-existential principle. From a meta-cultural point of view, Yoga does not react to avidyā and duḥkha in a characterological or physiognomical manner, but in a manner which takes in culture in terms of psychological data or reflective processes (comparable to the approach in Buddhism, p. 251). Schopenhauer's metaphysical conclusions, rather, emphasize the epistemological aspect of ignorance in connection with the cultural implications of suffering. These focal points in Schopenhauer's self-centred cultural reaction have their meta-philosophical counterparts in certain meta-psychological steps that are taken in Yoga, as we have shown with special reference to kriyā yoga.

Deussen, in all good faith, attributed to Yoga a Schopenhauerian outlook on duḥkha, which we can no longer accept. Undeniably, suffering also plays an important role in Yoga, although neither in a meta-ontological sense, as in Buddhism, nor in a characterological-metaphysical sense, as in Schopenhauer. Epistemologically, duḥkha may perhaps be rated as a by-product of the wrong correlation which avidyā brings about. It strikes us as more significant that, on a meta-psychological level, duḥkha functions as a powerful indicator of the mind's entanglement in its production of false identities. It also appears as a motivator to put a stop to this process by eliminating those factors which "veil" or "defile" our true identity. While our true identity becomes in some way a function of the stabilization of the empirical consciousness in the course of yogic progress, will and individuality have no reality whatsoever and, hence, no stabilizing potential.

Meta-psychologically, some individual intentionality (for instance, some "willing" to connect with the primary impulse of understanding) might be implied in the act of stabilization through deconditioning (vairāgya) and reconditioning (abhyāsa). But this

movement towards liberation "negates" a certain state of consciousness only, not the evolutionary principle as such. Furthermore, in the ontological structure of prakrti we find no principle of will. On a psychological level, however, we encounter something like a principle of individuation. On one of the four guna parvans, on the aviśesa level, we have the differentiating and pluralizing principle of asmitā mātra, the "substratum-of-I-am-ness". From there we derive, as its personal psychological aspect, asmitā, or the principle of ego-hood. Asmitā represents practically a collecting point or focus for the psychological residue of "consciousness-of", i.e., of consciousness as we see it here and now. There is nothing essentially evil or negative in the manner in which it reflects the world. Even the phenomenon of individual suffering merely indicates some form of delusion or maladjustment within this residue. There exists an attitude of rejecting the conditions featuring the maladjusted kind of consciousness while meta-psychologically aspiring to liberation from the conditions of consciousness. From a Yogic point of view this rejection, or denial, is part of an enriching process. However, certain social repercussions, such as asceticism, may outwardly give the Yogic attitude of disapproval a "pessimistic" tinge. Culturally, in any case, Yoga as such (unlike Hinduism) remains neutral.

(c) The Germans and the problem of general accessibility

Our Germans display - often implicitly - a strong theoretical response to culture with, mostly, little scope for practical psychological aspects. A possible exception would be Gebser. We remember that Schopenhauer and his followers are culturally negative and psychologically quite neutral. Spengler, as we saw, concentrates on an intensely culturological approach which characterologically thrives on a negative morphology. But Gebser, who stigmatizes the phenomenon of German pessimism (especially as seen in Schopenhauer and in Spengler) as symptomatic for a cultural deficiency-level, includes an ambiguous perspective in his culturological outlook. He visualizes a possible change towards his target of an integral consciousness. Yet he remains covertly pessimistic, inasmuch as the prevailing state of deficiency might stifle the necessary mutational breakthrough. In the case of

Schopenhauer we saw that the principium individuationis served as a gate to his metaphysical rendering of his self-centred characterological view of the world. In Classical Yoga the analogous principle of asmitā-mātra rather provides a window which allows us to follow the basic Yogic implications in the consciousness linked change of personality. Gebser, who operates without any metaphysical or wholly psychological definition of the individual, attempts a culturological definition according to consciousness-levels. His conditional non-pessimism depends on an integrating consciousness mutation which amounts to a culturologically described psychological awakening. Although this event would have to be regarded as distinct from any change on a yogic level of Awakening, its conception takes Gebser meta-philosophically nearer to it than any of his forerunners mentioned here. Instead of any cultural protest, he aims at transcending culture (as we commonly know it) by radical culture awareness. Gebser (like Spengler) is very aware of the cultural factor in the psychological condition of consciousness. But, with respect to his hypothetical integration, he ignores the fact that philosophically the Indian tradition is genuinely committed to its own fundamentals. According to Gebser's (or von Hartmann's) evolutionary perspective, our perception of suffering may be one thing, and suffering another thing. Such a dichotomy would be un-Indian. Reminding us in a way of von Hartmann, and even of Hegel, Gebser's view suggests that India catch up, at least on a transitory basis, with the Western subject-oriented level of reflective knowledge (which, from a Spenglerian standpoint, would be a rather de-Indianizing move). Within his own tradition Gebser could claim that if our knowledge of the bad aspects of this world is true, we at least know the truth, which after all is something positive. However, this principle which conforms with his predilection for "polarization" is not shared by India. Lacking the clear dividing line which in Western thought separates the subjective from the objective aspect, yogic knowledge of our psychological condition would in practice altogether do away with the whole condition. (Or, seen Buddhistically, to know what suffering is would immediately eliminate it.)

At this point Gebser begins to worry. The extinctive submersion pursued by the yogin due to his largely still "mythic"

consciousness would, so he fears, for a Western individual amount to a betrayal of his "mental consciousness-level" (p. 159(32)). This may be valid relatively, in Gebser's sense. But his cultural characterology is self-descriptive (or "autobiographical", as Spengler would have said). Philosophically, the mythic consciousness structure is Gebserian, not Yogic. Seemingly reversing Schopenhauer, who had employed Indian philosophy for his own cultural rejection, Gebser now rejects "mythic" India in support of his integrative devaluation of pessimism. Just like Schopenhauer (but also like Hegel), Gebser misses out on the hermeneutic question of who is essentially different from whom.

Before we decide if and how Yoga may be accessible to non-Indian thought, we must remember that both Western and Indian thinkers take certain things for granted (the unquestioned background, p. 281, naturally given to us, p. 251). When we describe Yoga as dualistic, or ascribe to Schopenhauer (p. 290) or Gebser (p. 293) a certain dualistic slant, we differentiate on the basis of our own cultural background. Necessarily, this would also apply to such conceptions as "mythic consciousness". Yoga differentiates differently, somehow. Culturally Yoga is neutral. It would be inappropriate to search for any hidden Yogic background asset on the Indian cultural plane; it would be better to be aware of the obstacle in our own background. This means that Yoga can neither be rejected nor imitated in any straightforward manner. But, if we could become aware of the culturally different Western types of conceptualization (in general and regarding the Yogic phenomenon in particular), we could become invulnerable to the temptations lingering in non-Yogic approaches. On the basis of such a complex of awareness patterns (German and other), we could - at least theoretically - gain access to the yogic consciousness, and, in fact, become yogic ourselves.

Chapter Ten

Summary of German pessimism and what the Indians really meant

In two great steps we have exposed a shortlived tradition of metaphysical pessimism in German thought and explained to which extent it drew on Indian impulses. Inevitably, our meta-philosophical approach has revealed more than just a German metaphysical misunderstanding. The first, or German, part of this comparative study has developed and confirmed our thesis that philosophical pessimism is essentially a cultural epiphenomenon whose metaphysical formulations and reverberations represent the transformed experience of a characterological reaction to culture. (By contrast, our Greek-Roman philosophers drew their pessimistic conclusions on an individual existential basis, without creating any metaphysically structured concept of pessimism.) We have followed the historical change of this culture reaction through some of its most representative stages, on both a historical and a philosophical anthropological level, concentrating on the main concepts and principles which sustain and justify the concept of metaphysical pessimism and which have provided the necessary comparative links with Indian thought.

In our second, or Indian, part we have hermeneutically paralleled these essentially German concepts and principles both with

regard to the originally associated Indian concepts as borrowed by our Germans and with regard to their meta-philosophical Indian counterparts and complementary aspects. There is no ground in Indian philosophy for any genuine concept of metaphysical pessimism, an attitude of pessimism can be observed though.

(1) German pessimism: the tradition of a metaphysical transformation

Metaphysical pessimism originates in the course of the philosophical attempt to overcome culture inasmuch as it represents a bad and unacceptable world of suffering. The negation of what makes the suffering is part of the metaphysical description, but no way out. In a condensed or implicit form this culture reaction and its metaphysical transformation is repeated by each single one of our representative pessimists. In 1819 Schopenhauer steps forth with his fundamental pessimistic metaphysical view of the world. His followers, von Hartmann, in 1869 and 1880, and Mainländer, in 1876, publish their own modifying outlooks. In 1877 Deussen presents a Schopenhauerian metaphysical perspective which, still in 1917, he faithfully applies to his Indian explorations.

Our culturological thinkers refrain from developing metaphysical pessimism any further. Spengler's main work, in 1918, and Gebser's, in 1949, merely reverberate it by the rudimentary metaphysical structures present in their historiosophic outlooks. They consider metaphysical pessimism as superseded, allotting it a merely symptomatic position in their own morphological or integral views. In Spengler metaphysical pessimism becomes historical, abdicates in favour of a pessimistic historical culture projection. Gebser, who, like our other thinkers, attributes some pessimistic orientation to Indian thought, dissolves both metaphysical and historical pessimism. Our "tradition of pessimism" ends with Gebser. At the same time the peremptoriness which flavoured the earlier views (including their annexations of Indian elements) seems to vanish. Only a discrete and unobtrusive developmental worry remains in him regarding the potential realization of man's existential options. The philosophical expression of the German predilection for Eastern thought has turned from

metaphysically negative to historically and anthropologically neutral.

(2) Roots and ramifications

The Indian presence in German thought is no coincidence. Without India German pessimism would have had a different form – but not a different essence. Indian philosophy is not the starting-point for any of the German thinkers, but they draw India into their own culture reaction. Some of the roots and ramifications of their views convey the stimulating Indian contributions: not the metaphysical pessimism (India has none), but Indian concepts and forms - ready to be inserted and displayed on the respective metaphysical and culturological levels - are used in support of their principal culture reactions. Rhetorically India provides a seemingly "objective" angle, a source of elementary metaphysical "proof" or confirmation, as well as the culturological "evidence" to test and justify the historiosophic theories.

(3) What the Indians really meant and their pessimistic attitude

An Indian concept of pessimism is a philosophical impossibility. That is why we have formally referred this case to a zero-level of pessimism. In India cultural reality never became an object of any cultural awareness. In India thought as such simply is. Philosophical reflection traces its way back to this source or primary impulse, but never to culture. The Indian attempt to move philosophically from ignorance to knowledge is consciousness-oriented. However, pessimism is not a state of consciousness, unlike suffering, but a problem of culture. Our pessimists and our Indians alike know what, with respect to their characteristic universal concerns, they want to change, i.e. reject or overcome. When Schopenhauer says that the world is bad and full of suffering, he sees it in a characterological-metaphysical, non-psychological manner. In Buddhism the world, despite the suffering, is considered as neutral; it is our consciousness which is bad and deceptive. Similarly, in Vedānta the problem of change from ignorance to actually liberating knowledge is one of changing our way of seeing, rather than rejecting the world as a whole. Our Germans are not aware of the pragmatic consciousness factor in Indian philosophy or of its

yogic nature which officially warrant a way out.

The descriptions by the Upanisadic rsis imply a type of ineffable experience which European thought tends to categorize as mystical. Their experience of an impersonal primary impulse presents itself as a common body of spontaneously received non-personal knowledge. Meta-philosophically speaking, the content of this experience could have naturally ranked as ontological until the contrasting appearance of Buddhist thought. The rsis, attempting to explain their actually ineffable experience, would, in their speech and behaviour, assume what appears to us as a pessimistic attitude. But they use suffering as a non-ontological, descriptive, heuristic factor to indicate the kind of view which prevents the understanding of the identity of the ātman with the world. This attitude is primarily not a reaction against suffering.

The same principal pessimistic attitude may vary according to the role of suffering. The inner attitude of the sage who behaves horrified differs greatly from that of the overt distress which, according to the Bhagavadgītā, a common man such as Arjuna may display. Meta-ontologically, the wise Krsna can neither be a pessimist nor an optimist. But, didactically he assumes a pessimistic attitude when he teaches Arjuna how to die: in the Bhagavadgītā suffering is a central problem or condition which is justified with a view to man's ultimate ātman identity. Arjuna's philosophically negative response, his non-understanding, reflected by his actual worry, simply shifts the emphasis from didactic behaviour to popular behaviour.

In Buddhism suffering is emphasized in a non-ontological connection with ignorance but not in connection with any negative metaphysical volitional world principle. Suffering is, secondly, seen as a non-derived existential fact or principle which even yogic knowledge cannot abolish; however, it can stop it (our link with intentionality). Buddhism seeks liberation from what sustains empirical consciousness (which includes any form of individuality or personal reaction), instead of trying to reorganize thought content metaphysically and on cultural grounds. The pessimistic attitude

reflects a soteriological purpose. Nirvāṇa represents a definite enrichment (unconnected with the world, though), whereas the German expositions of the world effect no definite change.

Advaita Vedānta is less concerned with suffering and, instead, tries to overcome ignorance in the interest of the knowledge of reality and true identity of the self. The higher knowledge described by Śaṅkara cannot destroy anything, but it changes our manner of seeing by overcoming māyā. The necessary consciousness stabilization is attainable through yogic clearing of our perceptive mechanism, involving withdrawal from the self-limiting factors and sorting out the wrong data connections (some detached, subtle intentionality). Ultimate liberation is not actively achieved by adding perfection since it consists of some balanced state of identity with the brahman. Here the potential pessimistic attitude is largely absorbed by the non-cultural, soteriological function of knowledge.

The philosophy of Classical Yoga concentrates on a meta-psychological stabilization technology, with a strongly reduced pessimistic attitude. All phenomena are seen as transformations of prakṛti, the world ground (with the possible implication of intentionality). These prakṛtic constituents interfere with our direct understanding or seeing of our true identity, our Self, or puruṣa (i.e. pure Awareness or trans-empirical consciousness, which amounts to non-consciousness as opposed to empirical consciousness). Our non-understanding, or avidyā, allows the incessant production of false identities (known as asmitā, or I-am-ness), thereby causing suffering. Asmitā retains the empirical consciousness, which does not indicate a fundamentally negative function, since suffering is merely symptomatic of some maladjustment in this consciousness which is ready for correction through the yogic stabilization process.

Our German thinkers have demonstrated that we need a philosophical connection with India. Such a connection is necessarily of a comparative nature. Due to the large scale of our comparative analysis we have required a hermeneutic whose methodological coherence is based on culture. Quite independently,

culture also plays a key role in our analytical presentation of the conceptual levels and components of pessimism and their meta-philosophical Indian correspondents. Pessimism can be connected with suffering and decline, culturally, metaphysically, historically - but not in India. In this study we have tried to show in an exemplary manner that concepts which may comfortably circulate in European philosophy cannot be transferred to Indian philosophy without adequate hermeneutic considerations.

Bibliography

A list of quoted and unquoted sources

Abendroth, Walter.
- - Artur Schopenhauer in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten. Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1967.

Bagby, Philip.
- - Culture and History. London, 1958.

Baltzer, Armin.
- - Philosoph oder Prophet? Oswald Spenglers Vermächtnis und Voraussagen. Neheim-Hüsten, 1962.

Bambrough, Renford.
- - "Intuition and the Inexpressible", in Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis (ed. Steven T. Katz). London, 1978, pp. 200-213.

Bareau, André.
- - Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapiṭaka et les Vinayapiṭaka anciens: de la quête de l'Éveil à la conversion de Śāriputra et de Maudgalyāyana, 2 vols. Paris, 1963-71.

Bechert, Heinz.
- - Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus. 3 vols. Frankfurt, 1966-73.

Berkeley, George.
- - "A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" (1710), in British Empirical Philosophers (ed. A.J. Ayer and Raymond Winch). London, 1965 (1952), pp. 178-241.

Berdyaev, Nicolas.
- - The Meaning of History (tr. G. Reavey). London, 1936.

Bharati, Agehananda.
- - The Light at the Center. Santa Barbara, 1976.
- - The Ochre Robe. New York, 1970 (1962).
- - "Die geistigen Kräfte Asiens in der Krise der Gegenwart", in Universitas, 13.6 (1958), Stuttgart, pp. 561-572.
- - "The Hindu Renaissance and its Apologetic Patterns", in Journal of Asian Studies, 29.2 (1970), pp. 267-288.
- - A Functional Analysis of Indian Thought and its Social Margins. Varanasi, 1964.

Capelle, Wilhelm.
- - Die griechische Philosophie. 2 vols. Berlin, 1971.

Caro, E(lme Marie).
- - Le pessimisme au XIX^{e} siècle. Paris, 1878.

Conze, Edward.
- - Buddhist Thought in India. London, 1962.
- - "Buddhist Philosophy and its European Parallels", in Philosophy East and West, 13 (1963-64), pp. 9-23, and "Spurious Parallels to Buddhist Philosophy", pp. 105-115.
- - A Short History of Buddhism. London, 1980.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K(entish).

- - Hinduism and Buddhism. New Delhi, 1975 (1943).

Copleston, Frederick.

- - A History of Philosophy, vol. 7. London, 1963.

Dasgupta, Surendranath.

- - Yoga as Philosophy and Religion. Delhi, 1973 (1924).

- - Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Systems of Indian Thought. Delhi, 1974 (1930).

- - Hindu Mysticism. New York, 1977 (1927).

- - Indian Idealism. Cambridge, 1969 (1933).

Deussen, Paul.

- - Die Elemente der Metaphysik. Leipzig, 1890 (1877). (The Elements of Metaphysics, tr. C.M. Duff. London, 1894.)

- - "Über Schopenhauers Leben und Lehre", in Blätter für die Mitglieder des Wissenschaftlichen Centralvereins. Berlin, 1914, pp. 3-5.

- - "Wie ich zu Schopenhauer kam", in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 1 (1912), pp. 13-19.

- - Für Kant und Schopenhauer. Stade i. Hann., 1923.

- - Vedānta, Plato and Kant (tr. E.F.J. Payne). Karachi, 1943 (German 1917).

- - Jakob Böhme. Leipzig, 1922 (1911).

- - Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie. 3 vols. Leipzig, 1894.

- - (tr.). Sechzig Upanishad's des Veda. Leipzig, 1921 (1897).

- - The Philosophy of the Upanishads (tr. A.S. Geden). New York, 1966 (1906).

- - (tr.). Vier philosophische Texte des Mahābhāratam. Leipzig, 1906.

- - Das System des Vedānta. Leipzig, 1923 (1883) (1905). (English 1973 (1912)).

- - (tr.). Die Sūtra's des Vedānta oder die Śārīraka-Mīmāṅsā des Bādarāyana. Leipzig, 1887.

- - Erinnerungen an Nietzsche. Leipzig, 1901.

- - Erinnerungen an Indien. Kiel, 1904.
- - Mein Leben (ed. Erika Rosenthal-Deussen). Leipzig, 1922.

Deutsch, Eliot, and J.A.B. van Buitenen (eds.).
- - A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta. Honolulu, 1971.

Drews, Arthur.
- - Eduard von Hartmanns philosophisches System im Grundriss. Heidelberg, 1906.
- - Das Lebenswerk Eduard von Hartmanns. Leipzig, 1907.

Eliade, Mircéa.
- - Le Yoga, immortalité et liberté. Paris, 1972 (1954).
- - Techniques du Yoga. Paris, 1975 (1948).
- - Patañjali et le Yoga. Paris, 1962.

Feuerstein, Georg A.
- - The Essence of Yoga. London, 1974.
- - The Philosophy of Classical Yoga. Manchester, 1980.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb.
- - Über Gott und Unsterblichkeit (ed. Ernst Bergmann). Berlin, 1914.
- - Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben. Stuttgart, 1962 (1806).

Fink, Eugen.
- - Nietzsches Philosophie. Stuttgart, 1979 (1960).

Flew, Antony (ed.).
- - Body, Mind, and Death. New York, 1979 (1964).

Foucher, Alfred Charles Auguste.
- - La vie du Buddha. Paris, 1949.

Frauenstädt, Julius.
- - Briefe über die Schopenhauer´sche Philosophie. Leipzig, 1854.

Frauwallner, Erich.

- - Die Philosophie des Buddhismus. Berlin, 1956.

- - The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginning of Buddhist Literature. Rome, 1956.

- - Geschichte der indischen Philosophie. 2 vols. Salzburg, 1953-56.

Frobenius, Leo.

- - Paideuma, Umrisse einer Kultur- und Seelenlehre. Frankfurt, 1928.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg.

- - Kleine Schriften. 3 vols. Tübingen, 1967-72.

- - Wahrheit und Methode. Tübingen, 1965.

Gebhard, Richard.

- - "Ein Jünger Schopenhauers: Philipp Mainländer", in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 18 (1931), pp. 220-228.

Gebser, Jean.

- - Asienfibel. Frankfurt, 1962. (Earlier edition of Asien lächelt anders. Berlin, 1968.)

- - Ursprung und Gegenwart. Stuttgart, 1966 (1949-53).

- - Abendländische Wandlung. Frankfurt, 1956 (1942).

- - Der grammatische Spiegel. Zürich, 1963 (1944).

- - "Dualismus und Polarität", in Dialektische Meditation (ed. Rainer Kranich), pp. 24-43. Wuppertal, 1973.

- - Ein Mensch zu sein. Bern, 1974.

- - Verfall und Teilhabe. Salzburg, 1974.

Gérard, René.

- - L'orient et la pensée romantique allemande. Paris, 1963.

Ghate, V.S.

- - The Vedānta. Poona, 1960.

Glasenapp, Helmuth von.
- - Das Indienbild deutscher Denker. Stuttgart, 1960.
- - "Das Gottesproblem bei Schopenhauer und in den metaphysischen Systemen der Inder", in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 28 (1941), pp. 151-195.
- - "Lebensbejahung und Lebensverneinung bei den indischen Denkern", in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 22 (1935), pp. 177-194.
- - Kant und die Religionen des Ostens. Kitzingen, 1954.
- - Die Philosophie der Inder. Stuttgart, 1949.
- - Vedānta und Buddhismus. Wiesbaden, 1950.
- - Buddhismus und Gottesidee. Wiesbaden, 1954.
- - Die Weisheit des Buddha. Baden Baden, 1946.

Gupta, Anand Swarup.
- - "The Purānic Theory of the Yugas and Kalpas", Purāna, 11.2 (1969), pp. 304-323.

Hacker, Paul.
- - "Schopenhauer und die Ethik des Hinduismus", in Saeculum, 12 (1961), pp. 366-399.

Halbfass, Wilhelm.
- -"Hegel on the Philosophy of the Hindus", in German Scholars on India, vol. 1 (ed. by Cultural Dept. of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi). Varanasi, 1973, pp. 107-122.
- - "Indien und die Geschichtsschreibung der Philosophie", in Philosophische Rundschau, 23 (1976), pp. 104-131.

Hartmann, Eduard von.
- - Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus. Berlin, 1880.
- - Philosophie des Unbewussten. Berlin, 1870 (1869).
- - Das religiöse Bewusstsein der Menschheit im Stufengang seiner Entwicklung. Berlin, 1882 (1880).
- - Die Religion des Geistes. Berlin, 1882.
- - Philosophische Fragen der Gegenwart. Berlin, 1885.

Hartmann, Nicolai.
- - Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis. Berlin, 1949 (1921).

Hauer, J(acob) W(ilhelm).
- - Der Yoga, ein indischer Weg zum Selbst. Stuttgart, 1958.
- - Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis im alten Indien. Berlin, 1922.

Hegel, G(eorg) W(ilhelm) F(riedrich).
- - Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, vol. 2 (ed. Georg Lasson). Leipzig, 1923.

Heidegger, Martin.
- - Was ist das - die Philosophie? Pfullingen, 1976 (1956).
- - Zur Seinsfrage. Frankfurt, 1977 (1956).
- - Gelassenheit. Pfullingen, 1977 (1959).
- - Was ist Metaphysik? Frankfurt, 1975 (1969).

Heiler, Friedrich.
- - Die buddhistische Versenkung. Minchen, 1922.

Heimsoeth, Heinz.
- - Die sechs grossen Themen der abendländischen Metaphysik und der Ausgang des Mittelalters. Darmstadt, 1974 (1958) (1922).

Hirschberger, Johannes.
- - Geschichte der Philosophie, vol. 1. Freiburg, 1976 (1965).

Horkheimer, Max.
- - "Die Aktualität Schopenhauers", in Über Arthur Schopenhauer (ed. Gerd Haffmans). Zirich, 1977, pp.145-164.

Hume, David.
- - "A Treatise of Human Nature" (1737), in British Empirical Philosophers (ed. A.J. Ayer and Raymond Winch). London, 1965 (1952), pp. 293-515.

Hume, Robert Ernest (tr.).
- - The Thirteen Principal Upanishads. London, 1921.

Humphries, Francis.
- - "Review of G. Feuerstein's The Philosophy of Classical Yoga", in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 44.2 (1981), pp. 393-394.

Husserl, Edmund.
- - Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie (ed. Walter Biemel). Haag, 1954.

James, William.
- - The Varieties of Religious Experience. New York, 1901-1902.

Jaspers, Karl.
- - Der philosophische Glaube. München, 1974 (1948).
- - Existenzphilosophie. Berlin, 1974 (1964).
- - Way to Wisdom. London, 1951.
- - Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte. München, 1949 (1919).

Jennings, J(ames) G(eorge).
- - The Vedāntic Buddhism of the Buddha. London, 1947.

Jünger, Ernst.
- - Der Weltstaat. Stuttgart, 1960.

Kant, Immanuel.
- - Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Hamburg, 1976 (1781-87).

Katz, Steven T.
- - "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism", in Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis. London, 1978, pp. 22-74.

Klages, Ludwig.

- - Grundlegung der Wissenschaft vom Ausdruck. Leipzig, 1936 (1913).

Koktanek, Anton Mirko.

- - Oswald Spengler in seiner Zeit. München, 1968.

Lamotte, Étienne.

- - Histoire du bouddhisme indien. Louvain, 1967 (1958).

Lehmann, Gerhard.

- - Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart. Stuttgart, 1943.

Lips, Peter.

- - Schopenhauer und die Physiognomik. Hamburg, 1940.

Löwith, Karl.

- - Gott, Mensch und Welt in der Metaphysik von Descartes bis zu Nietzsche. Göttingen, 1967.

Lubac, Henri de.

- - La rencontre du bouddhisme et de l'occident. Paris, 1952.

Lübbe, Hermann.

- - Spengler heute (ed. Peter Christian Ludz). München, 1980, pp. vii-xi.

Mainländer, Philipp.

- - Die Philosophie der Erlösung. 2 vols. Frankfurt, 1886.

Majer, Friedrich.

- - Brahma oder die Religion der Indier als Brahmanismus. Leipzig, 1818.

Masson-Oursel, Paul.

- - Comparative Philosophy. London, 1926.

Mockrauer, Franz.

- - "Paul Deussen als Mensch und Philosoph", in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 9 (1920), pp. 1-84.

Müller, F. Max.

- - Three Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy. Varanasi, 1967 (1894).

Murjahn, Gerhard.

- - Romantik und Realismus in der Lehre Oswald Spenglers. Berlin, 1968. (Dr. phil. dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1963.)

Neumann, Erich.

- - Tiefenpsychologie und neue Ethik. München, 1973 (1948).

Nietzsche, Friedrich.

- - Also sprach Zarathustra (ed. Karl Schlechta). Frankfurt, 1977 (1885).

- - "Schopenhauer als Erzieher", in Über Arthur Schopenhauer (ed. Gerd Haffmans). Zürich, 1977, pp. 9-86.

Ñānajīvako, Bhikkhu.

- - Schopenhauer and Buddhism. Kandy, 1970.

Nyanaponika (tr.).

- - Satipaṭṭhāna: Der Heilsweg buddhistischer Geistesschulung. Konstanz, 1950.

Oberhammer, Gerhard.

- - Strukturen yogischer Meditation. Wien, 1977.

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doninger.

- - The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology. Berkeley, 1980 (1976).

Otto, Rudolf.

- - West-östliche Mystik. München, 1971 (1926).

Oupnek'hat, id est secretum tegendum (tr. Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron). 2 vols. Argentorati [Strasbourg], 1801-02.

Piatigorsky, Alexander.
- - "La riontologizzazione del pensiero nel buddismo" (tr. E. Zolla), in Conoscenza Religiosa (1978) (4), pp. 342-366; (1979) (1/2), pp. 195-220; (1980) (1), pp. 1-17.
- - "Some remarks on other stream", in Buddhist Studies, Ancient and Modern (ed. Philip Denwood and Alexander Piatigorsky). London, 1982, pp. 124-152.

Pieper, Joseph.
- - Was heißt philosophieren? München, 1973 (1948).

Pisa, Karl.
- - Schopenhauer, Geist und Sinnlichkeit. München, 1978.

Plato.
- - Werke (tr. F. Schleiermacher), parts 2 and 3. Berlin, 1817.

Plotinus.
- - The Ethical treatises, the first ennead, vol. 1 (tr. Stephen Mackenna). London, 1926.
- - Psychic and Physical treatises, the second and third enneads, vol. 2 (tr. Stephen Mackenna). London, 1921.

Plumacher, O(lga).
- - Zwei Individualisten der Schopenhauer'schen Schule. Wien, 1881.
- - Der Pessimismus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Geschichtliches und Kritisches. Heidelberg, 1884.

Popper, Sir Karl R.
- - The Open Society and its Enemies, vol. 2. London, 1962.
- - The Poverty of Historicism. London, 1972 (1957).

Radhakrishnan, S(arvepalli).
- - Indian Philosophy. 2 vols. London, 1971 (1923-27).
- - (tr.). The Principal Upanisads. London, 1953.
- - (tr.). The Bhagavadgītā. London, 1976 (1948).
- - (tr.). The Brahma Sūtra. London, 1960.
- - (tr.). The Dhammapada. Madras, 1980 (1950).

Rauschenberger, Walter.
- - "Philipp Mainländer" in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 18 (1931), pp. 229-245.

Renouvier, (Charles Bernard).
- - La Critique philosophique, année 3, tome I. Paris, 1874

Rhys Davids, Mrs. C(aroline) A(ugusta) F(oley).
- - A Manual of Buddhism. London, 1932.
- - Gotama the Man. London, 1928.
- - (tr.). Dhamma-Saṅgani. London, 1923.

Rubinstein, Susanna.
- - Eine Trias von Willensmetaphysikern. Leipzig, 1896.

Ruegg, D. Seyfort.
- - The Study of Indian and Tibetan Thought. Leiden, 1967.

Schayer, Stanislav.
- - Contributions to the Problem of Time in Indian Philosophy. Kraków, 1938.

Scheler, Max.
- - Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos. Bern, 1978 (1928).

Schmithausen, Lambert.
- - "Ich und Erlösung im Buddhismus", in Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft, 53 (1969), pp. 157-170.
- - "Die vier Konzentrationen der Aufmerksamkeit", in Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft, 60 (1976), pp. 241-266.
- - "Zur buddhistischen Lehre von der dreifachen Leidhaftigkeit (1)", in Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Supplement III.2 (1977), pp. 918-931.
- - "On some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of 'Liberating Insight' and 'Enlightenment' in Early Buddhism", in Studien zum Jainismus und Buddhismus, 23 (1981), pp. 199-250.

Schopenhauer, Arthur.
- - Works (Zürcher Ausgabe, 10 vols., ed. Arthur Hübscher). Zürich, 1977 (1818-51).
- - Der handschriftliche Nachlaß (ed. Arthur Hübscher). Frankfurt, 1968.

Schrader, Otto.
- - Maya-Lehre und Kantianismus. Berlin, 1904.

Schröter, Manfred.
- - Metaphysik des Untergangs. München, 1949.

Schubart, Walter.
- - Europa und die Seele des Ostens. Pfullingen, 1979 (1938).

Schumacher, E.F.
- - A Guide for the Perplexed. London, 1978.

Schwab, Raymond.
- - La renaissance orientale. Paris, 1950.

Seillière, Ernest.
- - Arthur Schopenhauer. Paris, 1911.

Seneca.

- - Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales (tr. Richard M. Gummere). 3 vols. London, 1917-25.

Sircar, D.C.

- - Inscriptions of Aśoka. Delhi, 1957.

Smart, Ninian.

- - "Mystical Experience", in Sophia, 1.1 (Melbourne, 1962), pp. 19-25.

- - "Interpretation and Mystical Experience", in Religious Studies, 1.1 (1965), pp. 75-87.

- - "Mystical Experience", in Art, Mind, and Religion (ed. W.H. Capitan and D.D. Merrill). Pittsburgh, 1967, pp. 132-158.

- - "Understanding Religious Experience", in Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis (ed. Steven T. Katz). London, 1978, pp. 10-21.

Spengler, Oswald.

- - Der Untergang des Abendlandes. München, 1969 (1918-23).

- - Politische Schriften. München, 1933.

- - Reden und Aufsätze (ed. Hildegard Kornhardt). München, 1938.

- - Gedanken (ed. Hildegard Kornhardt). München, 1941.

- - Briefe (1913 - 1936) (ed. Anton Mirko Koktanek in cooperation with Manfred Schröter). München, 1963.

- - Urfragen (ed. Anton Mirko Koktanek). München, 1965.

Stace, Walter T.

- - The Teachings of the Mystics. New York, 1960.

- - Mysticism and Philosophy. London, 1973 (1960).

Stcherbatsky, Th.

- - The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna. Leningrad, 1927.

Stern, J(oseph) P(eter).

- - Re-interpretations. Seven Studies in Nineteenth-Century German Literature. London, 1964.

Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro.
- - Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra. London, 1930.

Taubert, A(gnes).
- - Der Pessimismus und seine Gegner. Berlin, 1873.

Thibaut, George (Georg Friedrich Wilhelm) (tr.).
- - The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarācarya. 2 vols., S.B.E. 34 and 38. Oxford, 1890-1896.

Toynbee, Arnold J(oseph).
- - The Downfalls of Civilizations (L.T. Hobhouse Memorial Lecture No. 9, London School of Economics, 1939). London, 1948.
- - The World and the West. London, 1953.
- - A Study of History (abr. D.C. Somervell). London, 1960.

Trevor-Roper, H.R.
- - The Past and the Present. London School of Economics and Political Science, 1969.

Tucci, Giuseppe.
- - La crisi spirituale dell'India moderna. Roma, 1940.

Ulmen, G.L.
- - "Metaphysik des Morgenlandes - Spengler über Rußland", in Spengler heute (ed. Peter Christian Ludz). Minchen, 1980, pp. 123-173.

Vimuktananda, Swami (tr.).
- - Aparokṣānubhūti or Self-Realization of Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya. Calcutta, 1977 (1938).

Wagner, Richard.
- - Das braune Buch. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1865 - 1882 (ed. Joachim Bergfeld). Zürich, 1975.

Waldschmidt, Ernst (tr.).
- - Das Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra. Berlin, 1951.

Weber, Max.
- - The Religion of India, the Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism (tr. and ed. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale). New York, 1967 (1924).

Weininger, Otto.
- - Geschlecht und Charakter (unabridged). Wien, 1905.

Werner, Karel.
- - Yoga and Indian Philosophy. Delhi, 1980 (1977).

Willson, A(mos) Leslie.
- - A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism. Durham, N.C., 1964.

Woods, James Haughton.
- - The Yoga-System of Patañjali. Delhi, 1972 (1914).

Zaehner, R(obert) C(harles).
- - Mysticism, Sacred and Profane. London, 1975 (1957).

Ziegler, Leopold.
- - Das Weltbild Hartmanns. Leipzig, 1910.
- - Der ewige Buddho. Darmstadt, 1922.

Zint, Hans.
- - "Schopenhauer's Philosophie des doppelten Bewußtseins", in Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft, 10 (1921), pp. 3-45.